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CONTENTS

THE SHAPE OF THINGS

EDITORIALS:

SALVATION FROM THE BIBLE BELT	88
PROGRAM FOR PARCHED LANDS	89
TOM MOONEY—TWENTY YEARS AFTER	90
MIDSUMMER SPY MADNESS by Paul W. Ward	91
HUEY LONG THE SECOND by Gerold Frank	93
BACKGROUND OF THE SPANISH REVOLT by Frank Manuel	94
THE SOVET ABORTION LAW by Louis Fischer	97
ISSUES AND MEN by Oswald Garrison Villard	100
BROUN'S PAGE	101
BOOKS AND THE ARTS:	
BELIEFS IN POETRY by Horace Gregory	102
A POETIC VIEW OF THE NATURALISTS by Benjamin Ginzburg	104
COMPETITION GOES WEST by Walton H. Hamilton	105
STAR VEHICLE by Ben Belitt	107
PORTRAIT WITHOUT AN ATTITUDE by John Chamberlain	108
TIME AND MIND by Mark Van Doren	108
LINGUISTIC PATRIOTISM by George Genzmer	109
FILMS: MARC CONNELLY, MOVING MAN by Robert Giroux	

The Shape of Things

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WHISPERING CAMPAIGNS ARE A FAMILIAR item in American politics. Lies whipped like clothes on a windy line over Andrew Jackson's amours; over Lincoln's uncouth obscenities, Grant's drinking, Grover Cleveland's romantic peccadilloes. There was a nation-wide hissing of whispers over T. R.'s falsely alleged bibulousness. A suit was needed to quell the libel. In the second Wilson campaign whisperers were distributed over the country by trains de luxe; whispers, black and white, dogged Harding to his front porch. They are whispering now about Roosevelt, and some Democrats are disturbed. Needlessly. It is the lesson of American history that all bewhispered candidates (except Al Smith) get elected. Some think it is because of the whispering. If John Hamilton believes this, he had better start something monstrously abominable on Landon. But it is more probable that the function of whispering is symptomatic rather than causative. It seems to show where the mean spirited and contemptible tend to congregate; and that is not on the side of the American majority.

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AGAIN SPAIN IS BEING CHURNED UP IN THE agony of civil war. As Mr. Manuel's article on another page shows, there is no real unity among the supporters of the left government, and it is this disunity and the consequent lack of governmental decisiveness that has made possible the fascist uprising. True, the various left groups managed to get and stay together long enough to sweep the country with a united-front election in February of this year. But immediately the new government was established, the coalition dissolved into separate and dissonant elements. Rendered impotent by division the government has been able to take only small and tottering steps toward social and economic reorganization. With the workers' groups at odds with each other, with the government frustrated, the situation has been made more critical by the existence of the groups—the church and the landowners—most bitterly hostile to the new régime. The rumblings of counter-revolution which finally burst forth in the military revolt of July 18 can be traced to them and to the fascists in the army. The Spanish have now learned that a labor government must move speedily to gain control of the military. This is not so easy, for the composition of an army reflects the larger social organization outside the army, while drastic changes in the social structure cannot be put through without army support. This is the dilemma

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of the Spanish leftists. At present the government seems in control of the rebellion, largely because of the support the armed workers have thrown to it, but unless Spain can genuinely unify her workers and have their mass support for drastic reforms, it will be an empty victory.

*

HAVE YOU HAD ANY TROUBLE BUYING Victor records lately? The reason is very likely the strike at the plant of the Radio Corporation of America in Camden, New Jersey, where the records, among other things, are made. The strike was called by the United Electrical and Radio Workers Union, which claims to have called out 8,400 of a possible 9,000 production workers at the plants, most of whom are still on strike. Attempts at negotiation and settlement with David Sarnoff, president of the company, and with General "Blue Eagle" Johnson, special labor adviser, have had no result so far. The company has seemed friendly and inclined to compromise; but in the agreement concerning an election to determine the bargaining unit for the plant appeared a clause which not only bound the company to bargain with the majority unit but permitted it also to bargain with any other unit it pleased. The National Labor Relations Board will hold a hearing on July 25, out of which an election may come. While these legalistic moves are going on, rioting and bloodshed have been taking place on the picket line and the New Jersey police have arrested nearly 400 strikers and lodged them in jails so crowded there is not room for them to lie down. Under the leadership of Supreme Court Justice Frank T. Lloyd, however, the courts have really set New Jersey apart in the matter of dealing with labor cases. On Thursday, July 16, 123 persons were arrested; 4 of them were held by Justice Lloyd for the grand jury on bail of \$10,000 each; 93 were held for hearing on July 21 on \$5,000 bail. The charges were assault and battery, disorderly conduct, or inciting to riot, although many of the prisoners seem to have committed no crime except to be employees of the Philco radio company. There seems to be no precedent for these extraordinary bail figures, even in labor-baiting New Jersey.

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THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS REDEEMED, after a fashion, two of the chief pledges of the Popular Front before the election, namely, reforms in control of the Bank of France and the armament industry. That both changes are popular was shown in the large majorities by which they passed the Chamber. When it comes to high finance we find ourselves in the position of Mr. Montagu Norman, who once said, "I don't understand it." But we can understand that the new set-up in the Bank of France is far from the nationalization which had been expected. The oligarchic rule of the famous "200 families" is ended, and a democratic governing council is substituted, in which the bank's 40,000 shareholders will have representation but no vote. The governor and two vice-governors will presumably be safeguarded against temptation through high salaries, pension-rights, and a prohibition against holding any private commercial position either during or

after their incumbency. The new law for expropriation of armaments manufacturers allows the government to proceed at its discretion with the purchase of all or a majority of the stock of such companies as in its judgment should be under government control. Its ability to do so will depend, of course, upon its success in selling its bonds to the public. Even these somewhat tentative reforms are important. But they remind us a little of a man handling hot coals with his bare hands. Possibly Mr. Blum could proceed more boldly if he first undertook that reform which the German Social Democrats neglected, which the present Spanish situation proves to be most vital of all to a leftist government, a thorough democratization of all ranks of army and navy officers.

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WHEN A COURT BITES A NEWS AGENCY, IT evidently isn't news. The most interesting aspect of the recent decision in the case of the Associated Press versus Morris Watson was not the decision itself—which was rendered by a group of judges who have distinguished themselves by fair-minded and public-spirited opinions, notably in censorship cases—but the way the Associated Press handled the story. Justice Manton of the United States Circuit Court, with Justices Swan and Augustus Hand concurring, found that Morris Watson had been discharged by the A. P. in violation of the National Labor Relations Law, and ordered his reinstatement with back pay. The A. P. sent out 192 words on the decision on the afternoon of Monday, July 13, just in time to make the last evening editions. Ordinarily a late story of this sort is given a follow-up the next day, but this was not done. Eighty-two of the 192 words were given to quotation from the decision asserting the right of an employer to hire and fire for cause. On December 21, 1935, Judge Merrill Otis in Kansas City declared the labor act unconstitutional. The Press Radio Bureau, which gets its news from the A. P., not only received a news story on the decision, but it was put first in a list of twelve "most-important" stories. The comparative handling, by the Scripps-Howard newspapers, of the Watson story and the story of Rupert Hughes's fight with the Screen Writers Guild is also interesting. The Hughes story appeared on the front page of the New York *World-Telegram* on Saturday and was given front-page treatment also on Monday. The Watson story was given thirty-seven lines on page fourteen on Monday, with no follow-up on Tuesday. This doubtless exemplifies what Mr. Roy Howard would call the freedom of the press.

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HITLER IS NOT YET READY FOR DER TAG. While the armament race is in process and while the Reich is building an army fit to challenge Europe, a conciliatory gesture does no harm and may have positive advantages. This is probably the real explanation of the Austro-German treaty. Friendly relations between the two countries are publicly proclaimed; Germany, it is promised, will not interfere with Austria's independence. Meanwhile, peaceful Nazi penetration of Austria may go on unhampered; in

time, perhaps *Anschluss* will be accomplished without anyone being aware that it was attempted. Karl Radek, in an editorial in *Izvestia* on July 14, cogently analyzes the German position. Germany must have Danzig and at the same time must not alienate Poland; by a process of economic and political penetration, German influence in the Balkans must be strengthened with a view to isolating Czecho-Slovakia. As far as possible, Italian friendship with Germany must be furthered—witness the recent new air agreement permitting Germany to use Italian islands of the Dodecanese group. And Germany must arm. But all these things take time. Partly to stave off a more hostile overt act, partly to make a move which will seem to indicate the good faith and peaceful intentions of the Reich, the treaty with a Vienna powerless to make effective resistance is offered to the world. Already in Austria the press and the radio have responded by refraining from any criticism of the Reich, especially with respect to the approaching Olympics. General amnesty is promised for all Nazi prisoners in Austria. The new treaty, in short, may well mean not the guaranty but the end of Austria's independence.

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"RUSSIA SHALL NOT HAVE CONSTANTINOPLE."

That was the refrain of the famous Jingo song all England was chanting when war with Russia was threatened in the seventies. On July 20 at Montreux Britain signed an agreement giving Turkey the right to remilitarize the Straits and giving the Russian fleet free access to the Mediterranean. She thus yields the principle of keeping Russia out of the Dardanelles that has been one of the consistent elements of her foreign policy for over a hundred years. That Britain has now given way means that she thinks a gesture of cooperation toward France and Soviet Russia; and, therefore, against Germany and Italy, is important enough at this time to make the sacrifice of her Straits policy worth while. The Locarno Powers' conference at London two days after the signature of the Montreux pact makes Britain's line-up with the Franco-Soviet group especially significant. Significant of what, unhappily, it is impossible to tell, because of the see-saw tactics of the British Cabinet. It may signify a bargain between the pro-French and pro-German factions of the Cabinet by which the stiffening against the Italo-German front at Montreux is to pave the way for concessions to them at London. On the other hand, it may mean that the pro-French faction has won out and will continue to be dominant when the Locarno Powers meet. But whatever the Dardanelles pact portends, it shows that there are two ways to break a treaty. It can be trampled under marching feet as in the Rhineland or it can be scrapped by request as at Montreux.

*

A CARTOONIST SOME YEARS BACK PICTURED one banker confidentially asking another, "What's this gold standard I've been hearing about?" The puzzled banker found living counterparts last week in the response of the financial community to the action of the Federal Reserve Board in raising the reserve requirements 50 per

cent. Excess reserves have been at all time highs for several years and are expected to reach \$3,500,000,000 by August 15, when the new order will reduce them to \$1,900,000,000. To speak in astronomical figures, present excess reserves would allow for a credit expansion of \$30,000,000,000. The new reserves would allow for a potential credit expansion of "only" \$19,000,000,000. Theoretically an increase in reserve requirements reduces the amount of available credit. It should therefore tend to increase the interest rate and lower the price of government bonds which now bear unprecedentedly low rates of interest. Actually the new move had little effect on the bond market because the reserves will still be higher than at any time previous to this year. A few smaller banks may be adversely affected and have to call in some loans, but the effect on the nation's credit structure as a whole will probably be negligible. The move is chiefly noteworthy as an indication of some readiness to use the new credit controls given the federal government by the Banking Act of 1935. But would any government—even a labor government—when faced by the actual choice, move decisively to stifle a boom?

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WE DON'T KNOW WHERE AMERICA IS GOING.

But we do know where she is. She is at the crossroads. All our most noted opinion-slingers say so, loud and clear. From Morningside Heights, the Delphi of today, comes the voice of the oracle. "We," says Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, "are at the crossroads in the history of the world." Where they will take us he doesn't mention, but simply that we are at them. Representative William ("Bicycle-cap") Lemke is more explicit. We are "again" at the crossroads, he says, and one of them leads to economic slavery. Presumably the other is a dead-end as he doesn't say where it goes. According to Dorothy Thompson in the *Herald Tribune* it is not "we" but "Freedom" which is the crossroad confronter, facing order in one direction and anarchy in the other. Alfred P. Sloan thunders through the roar of General Motors that "the nation" is at the crossroads, with free competition or regulation as the alternative. President Angell of Yale doesn't seem to have a very clear idea what the crossroads are but contents himself with saying vaguely that they are "critical." Finally we come to "America is at the crossroads!" uttered in the solemn tones of the Liberty League. One road leads to constitutional government and the other—but overcome with the horror of it all, the league shudders and remains silent. It is consoling to know that America is not alone in this dilemma, for the *Economist* of London remarks that Leon Blum is also at the crossroads, while our contemporary, the *New Masses*, which always knows, reports that British foreign policy is at the same juncture.

*

EACH TIME LA ARGENTINA DANCED SHE brought new magic to the stage. Her death means the loss of a true and rare artist. At the age of nine she started her career as a member of the corps de ballet of the Royal Madrid Opera and two years later was given the position of Prima Ballerina. It was not long before the restrictions

of the classical ballet form began to irritate her and she started her life-long study of the folk dancing of Spain. In this wealth of material with its forty-nine provincial variations and almost forgotten traditions she found for herself a means of expression which resulted in her name becoming synonymous with Spanish dancing. But it was not only these archeological researches into Iberian dance forms, costumes, and music that made her one of the outstanding figures of modern dance history. Rather it was her extraordinary personality and her ability to immerse herself in these traditions without losing the subtleties of their theatrical meaning. Each dance had so thoroughly been understood and studied that she became not only in the actual dancing but in the complete theatrical presentation—from her use of mime to her choice of costume—the instrument of expression of every dance she performed. There will undoubtedly be many followers and imitators who will try to inherit her mantle, but her abilities cannot be taught or learned. She is but another example, similar to Duncan, Pavlova, and Nijinsky, of those dancers who because of the depth of their artistry can make of their medium a universal language irrespective of the dialect they may have chosen.

Salvation from the Bible Belt

THE gathering of the Townsend clans in convention at Cleveland was by all accounts a remarkable affair. Although its leaders insist that the Townsend group is not a political party, the convention keynoters made their Republican predecessors at Cleveland seem mild and scholarly by comparison. The Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, with his references to Mr. Roosevelt as "a liar" and "great betrayer," could have given even the incredible Senator Steiwer some pointers on good taste, fair play, and political accuracy. The Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith, in the role of the irrepressible young man smashing his way into the leadership of a movement, outplayed even the irrepressible John Hamilton, and it is interesting to note that Dr. Townsend has the same touching admiration for the one that Governor Landon has for the other.

But the Townsend convention had three advantages over the Republican. It was bigger, it was folksier, and it had more surprises. There were some ten thousand delegates, and while they did not exactly form a deliberative assembly they did function as an audience. The folksy quality was everywhere: Dr. Townsend was photographed in suspenders and received the newspapermen shoeless, the clerical Mr. Coughlin spoke collarless and coatless, and the dynamic Rev. Mr. Smith, not to be outdone here as everywhere, recounted his plans and ambitions to *The Nation* interviewer from the depths of a bathtub. As for the surprises, the whole convention seemed to come out of cloud-cuckooland. The delegates applauded Father Coughlin when he attacked Mr. Roosevelt, and then applauded the "eloquent Cherokee," Gomer Smith, when he defended

him. Dr. Townsend was one day against Mr. Lemke's candidacy because there were a dozen better men easily available as candidates and because "Lemke can't quite swallow the Townsend plan," and the next day he was for him, without explaining how either Mr. Lemke's caliber or his swallowing power had managed to improve. The same cloudiness which formerly surrounded Dr. Townsend's successive phases of support and non-support of Senator Borah seems now to invest his attitude toward Mr. Lemke. As for the Townsend organization itself, the gyrations of the officers, directors, field organizers, and "citizens maximi" were too bewildering even for the best trained newspapermen, who felt as Alice must have felt in Wonderland. If Dr. Townsend, the Rev. Gerald Smith, Gomer Smith, the Rev. Charles Coughlin, Mr. Lemke, and the Citizens Maximi did not exist, it would be necessary for another Lewis Carroll to invent them.

But the tragic thing for America is that they are not inventions but realities. Those men and women sitting there listening to the oratory—pathetically eager, infinitely hopeful, dangerously credulous—they too are realities. They are part of the human material that can be used either for building or destroying America. They came to Cleveland from California, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, New York; they came by bus or broken-down Ford or they sat up in the railroad coaches; they came bringing their battered suitcases and got dollar-a-night lodgings. They are the non-drinking, non-smoking, Bible-reading debt we are paying to our Puritan and evangelist past. Their faces show them narrow, bigoted, crotchety, millennial—but we must remember that for them the millennial dreams are only the dreams of security. They are not all America, but they are an important phase of middle-class America.

It is not hard to see why Coughlin, Lemke, and Gerald Smith tumbled all over each other in order to court these people. Their courting had about it something of the wolf eager for the fold. These leaders without movements, these politicians without parties or voters, these *Führers* without armies know a good thing when they see it. Dr. Townsend may be clever or naive, honest or unscrupulous, but whatever he is, he is no match for these newcomers into his movement. Their quarrels were quarrels over their prey, and even their patchings-up were intended mainly to keep the victims from being frightened off. The half-million faithful Townsendites and the even larger number of hangers-on would serve very handsomely to swell a political movement that promised them enough. And men like the Rev. Gerald Smith would not be reluctant to make promises.

The immediate importance of the Townsend convention is that it served to patch up an alliance among what is being called the "crackpot quartet"—Coughlin, Gerald Smith, Townsend, and Lemke. In this alliance Coughlin furnishes a radio audience, a paper organization, and contacts with those who would profit by a defeat of Mr. Roosevelt; Smith seems to furnish nothing but a rabble-rousing manner and a desire to wear the mantle of Huey Long; Townsend furnishes the organization and the followers; Lemke furnishes a farm support that probably falls far short of his claims. Analyzed from another point

of view the alliance is one between a fanatical old-age-security movement, an inflationist-agrarian movement, and a red-baiting movement. In return for lip-service to the Townsend idea, Dr. Townsend has agreed to throw his followers behind the currency-control schemes of Coughlin and Lemke and the vicious anti-radicalism of Coughlin and Gerald Smith.

Let us make no mistake about it. The crackpot quartet has no intention and can have no hope of succeeding with the old-age-pension plan. Smith and Townsend let the cat out of the bag when they said that their goal was not the pension plan but the defeat of Mr. Roosevelt. The large portion of Dr. Townsend's speech that was devoted to the so-called budget extravagances of Mr. Roosevelt might easily have been delivered by Mr. Landon, and might indeed have been inspired by the same sources. These men recognize clearly enough that Mr. Roosevelt is the great hurdle in their path to what may easily become an American fascism. *The Nation* does not wish to throw the word "fascism" about loosely. But the interview with the Rev. Gerald Smith, which appears elsewhere in this issue, leaves little doubt of his fascist intentions and caliber and of the menace that he represents. Father Coughlin is more subtle but not less dangerous. And it is significant that in its issue of June 30 one of the vicious anti-Semitic sheets published in New York reports a speech before one of the Nazi clubs by one A. Tellian. He "discussed the prospects of Lemke becoming President. His platform was compared with that of Hitler's party as well as with the platform of the club, and it was found that in so far as the social aims are concerned, they are absolutely identical."

The unholy four can hope for no support from the majority of American workers, farmers, technicians, professional people, small business men. Their main reliance must be upon the fanatical, the bigoted, the psychically starved portion of the lower middle class. Gerald Smith is now talking of forming a youth movement to effect his purposes. Someone should tell him that he stands no chance. The youth of America, whatever their political direction, know that salvation will not come from the Bible Belt.

Program for Parched Land

THE world moves. Not more than five years ago wretched farm families trekking from sporadic drought areas would stop at the houses of the more fortunate who had enjoyed the boon of rain, to beg for a forkful of hay and a bit of oats for their skeletonized teams, milk for their sick children, or perhaps a corner in the hayloft for a desperate-eyed wife about to give birth to a child. The all-powerful Washington government took cognizance of such tragedies and recommended charity, an ennobling virtue and splendidly economical from the point of view of the federal treasury and the underlying income-tax payers. Today the government recognizes in

the drought a major disaster which demands instant and effective action. Never again will the burning out of tens of thousands of farmers be regarded as merely a harsh incident in the training of rugged individualism.

The immediate relief plan of the Resettlement Administration is an intelligent one. Relief first of all, not only to keep the farm population alive, but to insure the most essential part of its equipment. The government will find forage for the "foundation" live stock, whose loss would cripple the farmer in his efforts to get back on his feet when a better year comes. The promise to assist the farmers in financing fall sowings of wheat and rye is of immense importance to the farmer's morale. Work will be found for as many farmers as possible on soil and water conservation projects which we may hope will be as useful as the limited time for planning them permits. But most important of all, these emergency measures are to be treated as only a preliminary to long-range planning designed to adjust the economy of the high prairie to climate and soil. No extensive relief will be given except to farmers who are prepared to cooperate in carrying through a plan for putting back into grass the lands that should never have been broken, and for developing intensively the lands that are normally fairly watered and need only good farm practice to restore the fertility stripped from them by continuous wheat cropping.

Why does not the Liberty League cry out against this program? It involves planning, baleful word, copyrighted by Soviet Russia. The Liberty League is silent because there are times when the most sterling—or sterling plated—principles must yield to common sense. There can be no literate person in the United States who does not now realize that the unplanned exploitation of our agricultural lands is undermining our institutions as neither foreign enemies nor the "enemy within our gates," Liberty Leaguers or bolsheviks, can undermine them. In the dust bowl some millions of acres of fair grass lands have for all practical purposes been blown away. Another hundred million acres have been rendered virtually worthless by water erosion; half a billion more have been seriously damaged. If we keep to our present course—and, for all the talk, we are still keeping to it—the next generation, struggling for its share of the world's shrinking food supplies, will read incredulously the records of our deep concern over surplus food production.

The unplanned use of our originally fertile soils has been proved a ghastly and disastrous failure. How about the unplanned use of our forests? That was proved to be a failure as far back as the time when Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot laid their heads together for the common good. How about the subsoil, our coal and iron, oil and natural gas, upon which our majestic industrialism is based? Our readers will have to forgive us for asking silly questions. Even morons know that we are running through our mineral heritage like super-drunken sailors.

Land and labor, as the old-fashioned economists used to put it, are the two essentials of economic welfare. We have played hob with our land. Our labor supply, thank God, is intact. But is it? Do eleven million men come out of a prolonged period of unemployment as good as they were

when first laid off? Another silly question. Of course they don't. For some hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, the disposition to address oneself assiduously to economic tasks has been carried away by the winds for good and all, like the top soil of the dust bowl. Would planning be amiss here or shall we wait for the development of a real proletariat in the original Roman sense, a mob fit for nothing but the spawning of progeny?

The Tugwell long-range drought program is a plan for the conservation of both land and labor. In its present tentative form it is inadequate, not to say feeble. The handing out of information and microscopic loans will not do much to promote removal from bad land and closer settlement with intensive cultivation on the lands that are capable of sustaining a larger population. But this is really immaterial. What is material is that a process has been set in motion toward a rational ordering of our rural life. It is a process which, once in motion, will go on, no matter who may occupy the White House. Our agricultural economy will for a long time be badly planned. But planned it must be if we are to survive as a great nation.

Tom Mooney—Twenty Years After

IT is twenty years since Thomas Mooney and Warren K. Billings were arrested and charged with having set the bomb which exploded among spectators of the San Francisco Preparedness Parade on July 22, 1916. That bomb killed ten people and wounded forty others. It was also the direct cause—or possibly, even, the chief act—of a conspiracy on the part of big business in San Francisco, which has maimed the lives of two men and would even have brought Tom Mooney death by hanging had not a world-wide protest on the part of the working class moved President Wilson to intervene in his behalf.

The Mooney-Billings frame-up was part of the ruthless warfare which big business in California has been conducting for the open shop ever since the McNamara confessions in the Los Angeles *Times* case broke the militancy of the A. F. of L. and sent its leaders scrambling into the shelter of "respectability"—that is, due deference to the interests of the owning classes. As Louis Adamic has phrased it in "Dynamite," "Mooney and Billings in jail are an advertisement to the exploiters of labor that capital in California is able to keep labor 'in its place.'" This is why the State Supreme Court, with the honorable exception of Justice William H. Langdon, has steadily refused, when these cases have come up before it, to recognize the incontrovertible evidence of perjury and conspiracy. This is why no governor of California has had the courage to court his own political and economic destruction at the hands of the exploiting class—by granting a pardon to Tom Mooney. And this is why the financial and industrial overlords of San Francisco maintain the attitude lately voiced in private conversation by a prominent banker when he said, "Yes, Tom Mooney ought to be released so

that he can be shot as he walks out of the prison gates."

Thanks to this intransigence of California capitalists, Mooney and Billings stand before the workers of the world today as victims of capitalist oppression. Tom Mooney especially has become, in his prison cell, a focus for all the violent emotions which class-war releases on both sides. For Mooney, before his arrest, was an energetic left-wing labor leader. He belonged to the Socialist Party. He had introduced, at the 1912 convention of the International Molders' Union, to which he belongs, a resolution calling for the industrial organization of labor. And at the time of his arrest he was attempting to organize the employees of the San Francisco street-car company. This record accounted for the conspiracy against him. It also largely accounts for his international fame as a symbol of the proletarian cause.

What sort of man have twenty years of unjust imprisonment made of Tom Mooney? Five years ago Lincoln Steffens wrote,

Tom Mooney was stating his case, proving his (undoubted) innocence, and as he talked we all felt that he was not only innocent; he had become a righteous bore, an offense with his rights and his wrongs.

Jay Lovestone, writing this week in the *Worker's Age*, says of Mooney:

Twenty years of continuous dungeon life have not broken his body or his spirit. . . . What was to me the most welcome surprise of all was Tom's mind, his intelligence, his keenness and variety of interest, the extent of his keeping up with the kaleidoscopic changes in the American and world labor movements. . . .

Of these two pictures neither, probably, is complete without the other. If Lovestone's were the whole truth, the fact would diminish not the injustice but the horror of Mooney's plight. And how could any man, unjustly imprisoned for twenty years, help becoming obsessed with resentment against the injustice that has wrecked his life? Granted that Mooney retains his interest in the labor movement. Granted that his knowledge of his innocence, the support of workers all over the world, have sustained his courage to keep up the fight for release, and his energy to direct it from his prison cell. There is also ample evidence that injustice has embittered his mind and made him capable of suspecting and turning against those very people who have sacrificed most for him. This is but human, and deepens his tragedy in the eyes of sympathetic people. It is proof of the terrible truth that stone walls *do* a prison make, and iron bars a cage.

Twenty years after his arrest, Tom Mooney is appealing once more to the Supreme Court of California, which will almost certainly deny him justice as it has before. If it does, the case will be carried to the Supreme Court of the United States. Whatever the outcome may be, Mooney and Billings have taken their place on the roll of martyrs to the cause of American labor, along with the Haymarket victims, Sacco and Vanzetti, and so many others. And American labor, with all its backwardness, does not forget its sacrifices in the class war.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Midsummer Spy Madness

Washington, July 19

WHAT with the Secret Service caught spying on the Justice Department's Ogpu and a former officer in our Navy arrested on charges of selling "secrets" to the Japanese, you must if you've been reading the newspapers, think this has been Spy Week in Washington. But the truth will out, and the truth in this case is that it's always Spy Week in the nation's capital, and the manifestations of the one just past differ only in degree from those of its predecessors. They are all products of a chronic bureaucratic jitters and, save in the case of John S. Farnsworth, the arrested naval outcast, are scarcely to be taken seriously.

Every federal agency has its squad, platoon, battalion, or army corps of sleuths. The Treasury has no less than six different sets of them. Without exception, they spend a great deal of their time checking up on each other or on each others' bosses. There is scarcely a major agency in which wires have not been tapped at one time or another so that bosses might listen in on the private conversations of their underlings or of rival subalterns. There is hardly a major executive who does not have his secretary cut in and take protective notes on his own telephone conversations. Dinner parties have also felt the brush of intra-office and interoffice espionage, which was particularly rife about a year ago in the AAA and for a time promised to become a major intramural activity in Secretary Ickes's department. If the situation is worse under the New Deal than it was under preceding Administrations, it is merely because this one, more than those others, lacks the integrating influence of boodle; its executive officers in many cases are men who have achieved their present eminence without benefit of the spoils system and are often, therefore, more than a little self-righteous and suspicious of others.

The fundamental urge behind it all does not change from one Administration to the next. That is the urge of each bureau to outshine the others in ways that increase its chances of wangling favors from Congress. Those favors entail ever increasing appropriations, promotions, and salary boosts or, on the other hand, security against curtailment of powers, functions, personnel, and salaries. The current conflict between the Secret Service and the G-men is precisely one of that sort, and it differs from like conflicts of the past only in that, instead of being hushed up and settled by private negotiation in the sacristies of department heads, it has been dragged out into the open by J. Edgar Hoover and his boss, the Attorney General. And here the difference is really an accentuation of the similarity, for the conflict has been bared merely as a stratagem essential to the G-men's aims, which are those

of self-defense. They have got so far out in front of all the other sleuthing agencies of the federal government as to have acquired the jealous enmity of them all. Furthermore, there is a growing suspicion among members of Congress that they themselves have not escaped the surveillance of the G-men and are even now or shortly will be the individual subjects of dossiers in Hoover's files.

Mr. Hoover's life has been made a little more uncomfortable in the last few days by public charges that his highly-publicized fingerprint section is, in reality, a sweat-shop where underpaid young men work long hours of overtime for no extra pay and the collective-bargaining rights of workers are as little revered as they are in the steel mills and automobile factories. The Justice Department local of the American Federation of Government Employees has filed charges that seven employees of the fingerprint section have been fired for union activity and that to hide the real purpose behind their forced resignations on charges of inefficiency, a frame-up has been arranged involving misplaced prints in their files. The charges are persuasively documented in detail in a brief the local has laid before Cummings. The brief might have added that until recently all of more than a hundred men employed in the section had to be college graduates and that the bureau has decided to abandon that requirement because it found that a personnel of too high caliber bred "discontent." Its employees start at \$1,440 and can work up to \$1,620. The union's protest was filed just as word emanated from authoritative sources that Hoover had decided privately to make no attempt to enforce the recently-enacted Byrnes bill, designed to nick the business of Pearl Bergoff and his clan by impeding the shipment of strikebreakers across state lines. Hoover, you may recall, was the guest at Pittsburgh last October of a former G-man, Charles F. Ruck, who was identified by witnesses before the LaFollette committee as the chief of United States Steel's reorganized espionage system.

One of the charges against the Secret Service back in 1908 when it was reduced to its present state was that its operatives had shadowed a navy officer who had run away with another man's wife and that they had made a report which led to the officer's dismissal. The point is pertinent here because it brings us back to the Farnsworth case. There is a nasty story going around in military circles here to the effect that the real cause of the navy's grudge against Farnsworth is that he had a certain way with women which, not without some cause, aroused the enmity of two of his superiors and caused them to put him under a surveillance out of which grew the charges that led to his court martial and dishonorable discharge in November, 1927. The charges were that, contrary to regulations, this former lieutenant commander and naval-aviation expert had borrowed money from an enlisted man and then

had compounded the crime by urging the man to deny that the loan had been made or solicited.

Whatever the merit of this gossip, it is at least true that in the intervening nine years Farnsworth has been hounded by the Navy Department, but no more so, it must be admitted, than all its other former officers whom it has cashiered. He has for most of that time been reduced to beachcombing in Washington, which means that he has been hanging around the fringes of the naval, diplomatic, and military supply sets, trying to recoup prestige sufficiently to get a job in keeping with his training. Such jobs are hard to get, with the Navy Department blazoning a man's record of disgrace in answer to all relevant inquiries, and they are even harder to hold under the circumstances. In consequence, it is little wonder that Farnsworth has been drinking heavily. The tremors he has exhibited since his arrest are those of alcohol, not fright.

His case would have attracted relatively little attention if it had not come close on the heels of the Thompson case at Los Angeles where a former yeoman, Harry T. Thompson, on July 6 was sentenced to a fifteen-year term in prison for selling naval "secrets" to Japan. It was the first case of its kind in the military and naval annals of the United States, according to the court that passed sentence. The same court has since alleged that the Thompson prosecution was a "test case" and that it and the Farnsworth case mark merely the beginning of a wholesale round-up of dangerous spies.

Secretary Hull quite plainly wishes that the gold-braided gentry with whom he shares the State, War, and Navy Building would cease playing such dangerous games and keep their melodramatic instincts in check. He was not consulted in advance of Farnsworth's arrest July 14, and he has the admirals in a sweat because he refuses to lodge a formal protest with the Japanese government and a demand for the recall of its emissary with whom, they allege, Farnsworth dealt.

On the other hand, it is a little difficult to believe that the navy is truly alarmed by the deeds it attributes to Farnsworth and Thompson and has moved against them in this sensational fashion for no other reason. At Thompson's trial it produced no proof that he had scraped up for his employers any information they could not have obtained from the daily press of the West Coast. The charges they make against Farnsworth are scarcely more weighty in a material sense. He admits having had dealings with the Japanese, and it is a fact, though not generally known, that he spent fifteen minutes in the Japanese embassy here on the morning of the day of his arrest. He also admits having received \$1,000 from the Japanese for what he says were harmless monographs on technical subjects. He says that he was trying to impress the Japanese with his talents in the hopes of landing a job with them as an adviser on aviation, and that such pictures and documents as he submitted to them were all public pictures and documents which they might have obtained themselves. He adds that he made similar attempts to land jobs with the Russians, Argentinians, Peruvians, Brazilians, and Chinese but only Japan nibbled at his bait.

His accusers, who obviously are a little at a loss as to

what to do with him now, allege on the other hand that he turned over to the Japanese a confidential manual called "The Service of Information and Security," but even Admiral Standley, chief of naval operations, seems to have doubts that the volume contained any valuable secrets. It appears that the volume deserves about the same secrecy-rating as the annual "confidential" number of your wife's sorority magazine and that, if Farnsworth sold anything that was truly a secret of the American military fraternity, it must have been the admirals' grip and the general board whistle. I am informed by naval reservists that they receive regularly through the mail correspondence lessons from the Navy Department that would be far more valuable to an enemy nation than anything in the manual at issue in the Farnsworth case. I gathered that the confidential information to which they referred dealt with new developments in ship and gun construction, and I proceeded to discount it accordingly, for certainly there is nothing about what should truly be naval secrets that our Navy Department wants to or does keep secret from other nations. The Nye Committee showed that our Navy Department fights with the munitioners to keep the making of the implements of war in private hands and that those private hands, lacking the patriotic feelings which keep the nation filling them with new orders for guns, bombs, shells, gas, ships, and planes, have never hesitated to deliver the benefits of their technical proficiency to other nations for a profit.

In short, the suspicion will not down that the Farnsworth and Thompson cases, technically well-founded though they may be, are merely the natural by-product of one of the two divisions of the military and naval caste, the *very* military and naval division. The other division is made up of those soldiers and sailors who, despite their training, have managed to retain perspective and some common sense in matters affecting their professions. They are in the minority, of course. The majority are like Captain William D. Puleston, chief of Naval Intelligence, a womanish old man who in his quiet way is one of the country's leading red-baiters. It was Puleston who a year or so ago told a Congressional committee the famous story about the Communists using comely gals to entrap those of our gallant sailor lads who could not be won to Moscow by leaflets dropped down ships' ventilators on visiting day. Puleston was also the chief force behind the Tydings-McCormack bill. Twice passed over by the selection board and doomed to retire shortly without having attained a rear admiralty, Puleston seems to think a spy hunt his best chance of going out in a blaze of glory, along with Rear Admiral Joseph M. Reeves who, as commander of the United States fleet a few months ago, signaled the onrush of the current spy scare by issuing a general order. The order forbade officers and enlisted men to have cameras aboard ship. Roundly blasphemed against throughout the navy as a silly mandate that would serve no purpose save to prevent men on foreign station from sending photographs of temples, junks, and rickshas home to their families, it had to be amended so that the midshipmen might take cameras along on their training cruise aboard the antiquated Arkansas.

Huey Long the Second

BY GEROLD FRANK

Cleveland, July 18

"I'D LIKE an interview," I insisted, scrambling along with the Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith of Louisiana as he strode out a back entrance of Public Hall, where the Townsend convention was still in session.

"Sure," said Smith. "Come in the cab with us."

We got in—his wife, Mary, his secretary, the two of us. "How'd I do, mother?" he asked Mrs. Smith jubilantly. "I gave it to them, didn't I? It was up to par, wasn't it?"

"It sure was," said Mrs. Smith, patting his shoulder.

"They all agreed with me, didn't they?" Smith went on, mopping his face. "They all went with me, didn't they? I gave 'em everything. I always do."

He had given the Townsendites everything. He had the old folks ringing their cowbells and applauding themselves hoarse at one of the finest rabble-raising, Bible-quoting, "I'm-going-to-take-off-my-coat-and-give-you-a-red-hot-fightin'-speech" harangues ever sent through a loud-speaker system at a national convention. H. L. Mencken had his mouth wide open and his spectacles almost off his nose all through it.

Five minutes later the Reverend Mr. Smith was splashing vigorously in a tub at the Hotel Cleveland and I was sitting on the only available seat.

"You didn't see anyone disagreeing with what I said, did you?" he asked anxiously. "I speak from the heart. I don't have a cynical corpuscle in my body. I sweated like a Georgia pig, I tell you. Do I sound hoarse? That's not real hoarseness. I talk like that and sweat like that, six, eight, ten times a day. I just lose one voice and get another one on a different pitch. I never lose a pound, either."

He stood up and rubbed himself furiously with a towel. He is five feet nine or ten. He has sandy hair with a forelock, a bronzed, high-lighted face with high cheekbones like an Indian's, a large mouth with strong white teeth, a hawk-like nose, and staring blue eyes. He's healthy and likes being so. He weighs 200 pounds—"Huey Long and me used to weigh the same to an ounce. Wore each other's clothes. Huey—he was a genius."

The prevailing attitude of Townsend leaders toward Gerald Smith is fear. He's dynamite. He has a tremendous demagogic appeal. When he speaks he hunches his trousers, rubs his nose, dries the palms of his hands on his blue shirt-front, gulps water direct from the water pitcher. He has the gift of homely simile. "We walked out of the Senate room," he said, speaking of the Townsend investigation, "our arms linked together like an old steer and a young one galloping across the Texas prairies." He is cunning, ruthless—and proud of his ruthlessness, as a mark of Huey Long—ambitious, visionary, and naive. He makes no secret of his power. He makes no secret of his knowledge that he is a mob leader second only to his beloved

Huey. At thirty-eight, he is still a little astonished that he has it.

"I figure I've been worth about \$200,000,000 to the South. They like me down there. Democratic congressmen trade on me. They've always had the South in the bag, but now the threat of a Gerald Smith is making them come across with more money. We got as much federal funds as Mississippi and Arkansas together.

"You know what my ambition is? I think chaos is inevitable. I want to get to as many people as I can now, so that when chaos comes, I'll be a leader. I lead them now. Since Huey's death, 6,000,000 people have committed themselves to me—in writing."

"You mean they signed a pledge?" I asked.

"No," he said. "They wrote me, 'You're our leader. We'll follow you.'"

He began striding about the room, shaking the water out of his hair, still nude.

"People have tried to hang me, stab me, kill me. They've shot at me. A year ago last May they tried to hang me with a cable from my own sound truck. I was talking in Swainesboro, Georgia, to a bunch of Georgia planters. They began mobbing me. One man climbed on the truck and pulled the cable out. They were shouting, 'Hang him, hang him.' I walked out on a little platform"—here he jumped on a chair—"like this, looked them straight in the eye and said, 'The first man who touches me will die within the fortnight.'"

"I suppose they all believed you, didn't they?" I asked. "They're pretty religious down there."

"I believed myself," said Smith seriously. "I believed it was true, too. I was so right and good and honest and swell that I was sure any man who touched me would die."

"Let me tell you a little about my philosophy," he went on. "You've got to know how to lose the sense of the passing of time. I learned that from Huey Long. Many a man has lost a victory because he thought he had to go to luncheon at 12 o'clock. He got all cooled off by 1:30. You've got to be in a state of crisis to do things well. That means you've got to look over men and events, convince yourself that there is a crisis. Then you've got the mentality of a soldier in a trench. Nothing stops you. You're ruthless. When you're right and know you're right, you should now be ruthless."

Did he really think, just man to man you know, that the Townsendites would ever get their \$200 a month?

"I do. Why not? Haven't we had a national income of \$90,000,000,000 in this country? If we stop all usury and taxes, open our factories, run them day and night, set our machinery working the way it should be, can't we make it \$100,000,000,000? One-fourth the population is over sixty. Can anyone prove to me that it's wrong for one-

fourth the population to have one-fourth the income—especially since they're the people who've done everything and had all the babies. They're the fathers and mothers of every outstanding man in America, as well as every insignificant one. Why shouldn't the cream of the population skim off the cream of the nation's wealth?" he demanded, placing a foot on a chair and resting his elbow on his knee. "Doesn't a boy always put his mother first? Doesn't he let her go into the elevator first? We do it socially. Why not economically? Why shouldn't she get the first chance at the nation's money? You take your hat off to her when she gets in the elevator, but you let her starve when she gets old."

He began walking around, rubbing his bare chest, slapping his bare knee.

"These peanut-headed Jim Farley stooges ask how the Townsendites are going to spend all the money they get. Well, how did they build the country? How'd they build the Union Pacific, lay pavements, make roads, erect cities? How'd they have the babies? It's a fine appraisal of our American civilization that we can't give the people who built America credit for enough intelligence to spend the wealth they produced!"

"Do you think the Townsendites will grow in number?" I asked.

"I don't think in terms of organisms," he replied impatiently. "I think in terms of social organization. The people will keep on fomenting and fermenting, and some fellow like me, who's fearless and honest, will get on the radio, make three or four speeches, and have them in

his hand. The people are beginning to trust leadership."

"But isn't there a chance that you may pass on, like Huey Long, and that some unscrupulous man will take the people over for his own purposes?"

The Reverend Mr. Smith looked out the window.

"That's the hazard of political and social stupidity and a dulness of the social consciousness," he said rapidly. "People don't awake except with pain—and in the panic of pain they do irrational things."

Would he and his 6,000,000 support Landon?

"I'm not supporting Landon," he said emphatically. "Roosevelt is licked. He's whipped. As we say down in Louisiana, not only whipped, but whooped! As for Landon, philosophically and politically he's no better than Roosevelt—but he's not in. He's not entrenched. If he sees Roosevelt kicked out, he's not likely to follow the same path."

And what would he, Smith, do if Roosevelt wins?

"Well," said the Reverend Mr. Smith, drawing on his trousers and slipping into another blue shirt, "if Roosevelt goes back again with his threats and his bribery, I'll impeach him."

He paused for a moment and thought heavily.

"When I say I, I speak as a symbol. I'll head a movement to impeach him."

He stood silent, then, staring reflectively at the door jamb.

"I wonder," he said. "D'you suppose it would have had any effect, that speech of mine, if Landon would have been in the audience and were elected tomorrow?"

Background of the Spanish Revolt

BY FRANK MANUEL

(Mr. Manuel's article reached us just before the outbreak of the fascist counter-revolution in Spain. Its analysis of the strength and weakness of the Spanish Popular Front is striking in the light of the recent events.)

Madrid, July 10

A STRANGER attending the session of the Spanish Congress on June 16 and seeing the unanimity with which a left Republican, a Communist, a Socialist, a Syndicalist rushed to the defense of the Popular Front, would never have expected the outbreak of a revolt. He would have come away with the impression that the revolution was progressing with a majestic sweep. Unfortunately this parliamentary display was deceptive. The ovations which Prime Minister Quiroga received from the whole of the left cannot patch up the bitter internal conflicts which are weakening the Popular Front government.

In 1931 Socialists and Republicans drove the king out of Spain to seek refuge on the race-tracks of Europe. A coalition government was formed to build a republic of "workers of every class," vast social projects were con-

sidered, and libertarian democracy was to open new vistas for an oppressed people. Within two years this reformist government lost its morale because it was forced to suppress Syndicalist uprisings and to shoot peasants who had wearied of all the legal red tape which surrounded the agrarian reform. The workers felt that they had been deceived by the bourgeois Republicans whom they had raised to power, with the result that the three Socialist ministers who held office, Prieto, Caballero, and Fernando de los Rios, lost much of their prestige among the people. Legislative and judicial ineptitude in Madrid left the country under the influence of the *caciques*, the clergy, the landowners, the money-lenders, and the local politicians.

Under these circumstances the Jesuits and the aristocrats were able to effect their famous coup in 1933 and to wreak bloody vengeance upon all elements of the left. Only in the face of this reaction did the workers and the bourgeois again draw together. The proletarian parties first attempted a revolt of their own, the uprising in the Asturias, but it did not receive the necessary support in other parts of the country and for the moment was a fiasco.

in Paris, Prieto, the Socialist leader, conceived a Popular Front which would include liberals, Socialists, Communists, and Syndicalists. A whirlwind campaign was conducted for the elections of February 16, 1936, with Amnesty for the Asturias as the rallying cry. Azaña, the leader of the left, appealed to all elements and the favor of the Socialists was courted with great zeal. Much to the surprise of all the participants, the Popular Front won a decisive victory and, after three days of civil unrest, came into power.

On the morrow of the elections arose the same problem which had confronted the left in 1931. Who shall govern? This time left Republicans were sent into the ministries alone and the Socialists refused active collaboration. At the head of the state there is Azaña, a novelist, journalist, and lover of art. He represents that anti-clerical group of cultured Spaniards for whom one of the main aspects of the social problem is the preservation of the finer things in life. Some have considered him the strong man of the country, the one who led the first revolution and helped to achieve the revival of the left Republicans. To others he is intelligent, weak, vacillating, and most happy to have left the *mêlée* for the calm of the presidency where, according to the constitution, he must have no opinions.

Casares Quiroga, the prime minister, held the portfolio of the interior in the first Azaña Cabinet and of public works in the second. He is noted for his energy and administrative capacity. Though he came from an upper bourgeois family and was a successful lawyer most of his money was spent in fomenting the first Republican revolution. Of the whole ministry only he and his former assistant, who is now Minister of Public Works, may be expected to hazard extreme measures in favor of the workers. As Minister of War he holds a vital post and the manner in which he dealt with the rebellion of the officers of Alcala found favor in the eyes of the left.

Since the Socialists are the largest group in the congress, their refusal to participate in the ministry has placed the government in an ambiguous position. It would vastly prefer to have the Socialists partake of some of the responsibilities of these trying moments. But over just this issue, collaboration or not, the Socialist Party is divided into at least two groups whose mutual recriminations have been growing ever more scandalous during the last few months. The opposing organs of these two factions doubt each other's personal integrity, pass on to rank insults, and draw shrieks of joy from the monarchists, who agree with the accusations of both parties. This schism within the ranks of the Socialists is one of the real dangers for the progress of any revolutionary action. Prieto, the leader of the centrists who are in favor of participation, is backed by many of the intellectuals in the party, while Caballero, with the support of the General Union of Labor, heads the left Socialists.

The industrialists in the country are looking about for a Thiers, some ex-radical or ex-socialist leader who will stem the tide of the revolution through his influence over the masses. First Lerroux was their man; then, with very little discernment, they looked toward Azaña. Now that

Prieto has come to represent the right Socialists and is in favor of collaboration with the left Republican regime, they are considering him for the post, but he has rejected their advances. In justifying his support of collaboration in the left Republican government, he argues that there is no need for the revolution to be fought out on the streets when it can be effected through government decree. First he would raise Spanish economy from its present low station and then he would pull the social revolution out of his bag. Prieto feels that the example of the Nazis, a revolution by a party which is in power, holds a lesson for Spanish socialism. Violent revolution at the present time would cause a state of anarchy from which the workers would be the first to suffer.

With whom will the masses go? It seems quite certain that they will follow Caballero, rather than Prieto, and that as a result Spanish socialism will lose its most intelligent leader. The same thorny problem, evolution or revolution, which has caused the disruption of so many Socialist parties in the past, is now reappearing in Spain. All the old arguments on both sides will be piled up, the debate will grow bitter, and then each group will go its way, leaving enemies where once there were comrades. The political experience of two years in power, 1931-1933, made some of the Socialists abandon their reformist position forever. If the reformist policy of collaboration had any validity in Spain they would not now be reviving agrarian legislation which they passed two years ago.

Because of his militant position the socialist youth organizations are all with Caballero. They pronounce frequent expressions of unity with the communist youth and in some sections have achieved a complete amalgamation with them. The situation has its paradoxical side. We witness the spectacle of the official Communists, in their pursuit of the party line which calls for the preservation of the Popular Front against fascism, appearing far less violent in their declarations than the left-wing Socialists. The *Mundo Obrero*, the communist daily, regularly eulogizes the activities of the Quiroga government for the expedition with which the agrarian reform is proceeding and hardly ever intervenes in the quarrel within the Socialist Party. *Claridad*, the organ of the Caballero group, on the other hand, is never sparing in its criticisms, either of left Republicans or of reformist Socialists. As expressed by *Claridad*, the formula of the Caballero faction is diversity in unity. They permit themselves to pursue their own revolutionary program, but they will rush to the defense of the Popular Front as soon as its existence is endangered. The *Socialista*, in defense of the centrists, attempts to chastise *Claridad*, but it adopts the tone of an old lady. "Ah, what would Pablo Iglesias have said if he arose from his grave to witness the goings on at Ecija. This is not in the tradition of our party with its fifty years of struggle and self-sacrifice. We refuse to engage in this battle of mud-slinging initiated by the Caballero group. We will remain in our virtue." And yet, every once in a while, it loses its temper and asks indiscreet questions, such as where *Claridad* obtained money for its elaborate establishment, intimating that a bank of Catholic reactionaries supplied the funds.

Claridad cannot understand the zeal with which Prieto is pursuing his ideal of collaboration with the present left republican Cabinet. The journal goes on the assumption that the left Republicans, many of whom were incarcerated by the reactionaries, have learned nothing. Considering the pronouncements of Quiroga, and the actual measures taken by his ministry, this may be an exaggeration. It was the duty of the Socialists to sacrifice their revolutionary anti-bourgeois program in order to save the state from fascism and they accomplished this by putting the left Republicans in power. Now it is high time that the revolutionary parties began to work in their own behalf.

Alvarez del Vayo and Araquistáin as journalists have contributed much of the theory to Caballero's position. It is their ultimate plan to create a Marxist-Leninist Party which will include the left Socialists and the Communists. Though completely communist in its revolutionary Marxist ideology and even in its praise of Soviet Russia, the Caballero group has not yet fused with the Communist Party. This may be explained by the fact that the Spanish wing of the Third International has come into prominence only within the last two years. Before this there was a scattered group of Communist parties, some under Trotsky influence, others independent, still others under the direction of the Comintern, while none of them held a dominant position among the people. Within the past few years official Communists of the Third International have made tremendous progress, especially among the youth. Much prestige has been won for the party by the adherence of numerous groups of intellectuals, especially the revolutionary poets like Rafael Alberti. French anti-fascist writers, Malraux, Lenormand, and Jean Richard Bloch, are regularly coming across the Pyrenees to cement relations between the two Communist parties. It would, however, be extravagant to expect that this Communist Party, which is just training itself under the leadership of a sturdy worker from Seville, José Díaz, and is only beginning to win adherents, will absorb the old Socialist Party with its elaborate organization. And so the two groups, left-wing Socialists and Communists, remain separate though there is hardly any difference of opinion on vital issues.

In the meantime the followers of Caballero, in their crusade to form a united front of all workers, have carried on extensive negotiations with the Anarcho-Syndicalists and actually got them to vote at the time of the elections. These Syndicalists, who are united in the National Confederation of Labor, as opposed to the socialist General Union of Labor, are sometimes most unpleasant bed-fellows for the Socialists. Rooted in certain parts of Spain ever since the days of Bakunin, they are the unknown element in the present agitation. This is the last country in the world where in a capital city one can still witness a meeting of 20,000 anarchists and listen to a lyrical eulogy of abstract liberty. They are in favor of libertarian communism and are opposed to all parliamentary forms. Organized in the National Confederation of Labor, they claim some 700,000 adherents in their thousand unions while the Socialists number them at about 500,000. The Socialists are continually complaining that though there

may be some idealists among them and of the anarchists are loyal revolutionaries, cannot be relied upon during a moment of crisis during the revolution of October, 1934, of Spain, they did nothing; only in the Asturias, where their number was small, were they goaded by the Socialists and Communists. Yet they have a tradition in some sections of the country.

There is every indication that they will continue with their agitation and that strikes will only to be renewed again at the first opportunity. The problem then poses itself how the right Socialists are to react to these street workers, they should they become violent. As if crisis. Thus mere strikes the government can play throughout all alism and can warn the Civil Guard to intervene. It can pass out stringent orders into joining attack upon the people, backing up its long tradition with severe punishments whenever the government authorization. But when the movement assumes proportions, as of course in due time it must as a result of the cumulative effect of these general strikes, will the present left Republican government, with its strong Socialist tinge, repress the uprising of the people, as the former absolutist government did?

On May 24, in his speech at Cadiz, Caballero hoped to tame the anarchists by proving that there was no fundamental difference of opinion between the militant Socialist and the Syndicalist. "We, too, say that the bourgeois state must disappear because the bourgeois state is nothing more than an organization of oppression against a class, our class. And when this class triumphs and establishes a new regime, when the regime perfects itself, the state per se will disappear. This is the doctrine of the General Union of Labor." Thus the Marxist-Leninist withering away of the state is harmonized with the Syndicalist hatred of all its forms and institutions.

There is always the danger that the revolutionary movement will run wild, beyond the control of its leaders. The strike movements, which have touched every industry and every province in Spain, have put the people in a feverish state, aggravated by the warring of the two socialist groups. Nothing brings more solace to the heart of the corrupt Spanish bourgeois in the cafés than the sight of these two federations of labor sabotaging each other in strikes.

The liberals are much exercised over these strike movements which are spreading throughout Spain. They warn the leaders of the socialist U.G.T. that the violent Marxist tendency which made itself felt in 1933 alienated the people away from republicanism into the bosom of the monarchists. Unless these movements, which force the government to suspend its labor of reform, soon stop, there will be a complete disorganization of the Popular Front with results not unlike those of 1933. The fascist menace has been overcome only through the unity of the radicals of all kinds, but as soon as these groups fall out among themselves there remains the danger that the fascist Spanish Phalanx will arise in the midst of their quarrels.

Increasing the danger is the existence of the Civil Guard, a military body organized some sixty years ago, which has become one of the most disciplined corps in Europe. In the course of time this force, originally formed as a bandit patrol, has been transformed into the arm of the bourgeoisie against the workers. The Civil Guard in Spain is the real army. Since most of the recruits are drawn from among the sons of these guards, strong family traditions have become attached to this body. Children begin to prepare for the service at an early age in special academies where, along with a spirit of rigid discipline, hatred for the workers is implanted in their hearts. With such antecedents an intermittent battle between the Civil Guard, 35,000 in number, and the proletariat cannot be avoided. Why then does the government not advance with strong measures against this intractable body? The answer to this question reveals the pathetic position of Quiroga at this moment.

His government exists and nothing more. It lives with the continual threat of a fascist bludgeon or a military dictatorship over its head. All of its time is spent in settling endless strikes and all of its energy is wasted in survival. It is not undergoing any dramatic agony. It just moves along. Forceful measures are vital and it seems clear that the present government will not take them.

In the midst of these vacillations the ranks of the Spanish Falanx increase and there are rumors about shipments of ammunition which have been received and stored away. For every hideout of Primo de Rivera's boys which is raided, for each arsenal of arms and collection of uni-

forms which is discovered, there are many others about which the government has no knowledge. Its own police cannot always be trusted to ferret out the enemies of the republic. The fascists can play upon the despair of the workers and the divisions within the ranks of the revolutionary parties. Wages have not risen since this Popular Front government came into power. "We'll have fascism yet. That's all we deserve," said one worker from the National Confederation of Labor. And though I do not quote him as typical, he is a symbol of what might result from the present situation—the lassitude of the working classes, a state of indifference into which the reactionaries might rush to take possession.

There are a million unemployed in Spain and there is no dole except the meager aid granted by the unions to their members. Under the aegis of Spanish industrialists economic conditions must go from bad to worse. Many of them are closing up their factories and are leaving the country. In spite of all the restrictions on the movement of pesetas out of the country, millions are leaving with comparative ease. Spain is impoverished and any exploitation of its resources is dependent upon a total reorganization of its economy. Under these circumstances the fascist menace is no mere oratorical blather. The Supreme Court has declared the Falanx to be a legal organization and the inner conflicts among the workers combined with another parliamentary period of legal hair-splitting after the manner of the years 1931-1933—during which it took a year and a half to draft the agrarian reform—may yet open the gates for a brutal fascism.

The Soviet Abortion Law

BY LOUIS FISCHER

IN the Soviet Union, medicine is socialized. Almost all physicians work for the state, and all clinics, hospitals, and dispensaries are state-owned and state-operated. Private practice, however, is permitted, and the new and efficient Commissar of Health, Gregory Kaminisky, has even encouraged it; the communal health facilities are sometimes inefficient or imperfect.

What will happen, in conditions of socialized medicine, now that abortions are strictly prohibited except when the health or life of the pregnant woman is imperilled? Exactly what happens in any other country. This is not only my view. It was stated times without number in the Soviet press during the popular discussion provoked by the government's anti-abortion bill of May 26, 1936.

During the two past years, Soviet newspapers have printed a number of items about the discovery of secret, private abortion stations and the trial and punishment of those concerned. As soon as it became more difficult to obtain a permit to abort, illegal operations increased. Dr. Martha Ruben-Wolf, a celebrated German physician now living in the U. S. S. R., contributed an article on this sub-

ject to the Moscow *Deutsche Zentral Zeitung*. She related how, some time ago, a misunderstood circular caused several Soviet counties to prohibit abortions. "Immediately, the number of underground abortions mounted. When, several years ago, abortions were temporarily refused in cases of first pregnancy, many young women paid for this mistake with their lives or their health. In May and June, 1935, thanks to a bureaucratic permit system, the requests of many pregnant women were indiscriminately denied. As a result, innumerable instances of self-provoked miscarriages were reported by the Botkin, Sklifassovsky, and Arbat hospitals in Moscow." Other evils, Dr. Ruben-Wolf fears, will accompany the proscription of abortion. "The dread of conception," she says, "will bring back old sex abnormalities such as homosexuality, perverse relations, sexual neuroses, and so on."

It will have been noted that in the discussion which raged around this unfortunate piece of legislation, the choice was always: abortion or child. But what about the alternative of contraception? The law makes no mention

of this most pivotal problem. For this omission, the government was taken severely to task in a large number of letters which appeared in the press during the discussion. Dr. Ruben-Wolf places part of the blame on physicians "who do not give sufficient enlightenment on contraceptives to women after child delivery or after an abortion." Soviet women can get information on contraception in innumerable centers. Indeed, lectures on the subject are sometimes held in factories, clubs, collective farms. But the state, the medical profession, and the population have paid far too little attention to this phase. Many Russians, especially Russian men, have strong prejudices against contraceptives. M. Yeskoba, a woman physician at the Moscow Electrofactory employing 22,000 workers, most of them women, tells of her experience in teaching birth control. "There are many," she wrote in the *Moscow Daily News*, "whom we cannot convince, some who are predisposed in favor of abortions, others ignorantly skeptical, still others, strange to say, embarrassed by the whole idea."

Recently, however, a change has come about. "Since the publication of the draft of the anti-abortion law," M. Yeskoba related, "there has been noticeable a distinct increase of interest in birth-control methods. Women . . . are asking to be advised." Partly because women were not sufficiently educated and partly as a result of masculine pressure, the attitude toward abortions here has been much too frivolous. Any departure from this tendency would be welcome. But the authorities, too, are not free from guilt. In a country which has solved gigantic industrial problems—one has only to think of the latest example, the radical improvement of the transport system—it is certainly possible to produce high-quality mechanical and chemical birth-control paraphernalia. And if it is impossible, they ought to be imported. Moreover, though the facts of birth control are available to all, there has been no drive and enthusiasm behind the effort to disseminate them. Yet this is the weapon against abortions.

In the circumstances, it is natural to suspect that the government neglects birth control because it wants a larger population and large families. Indeed the draft of May 26, 1936, provided that a mother receive 2,000 roubles annually for five years for each child after her seventh, and 5,000 roubles after the eleventh. Letters to the press demanded that these premiums begin with the fifth or sixth child. Had the Kremlin accepted this suggestion, it would have been following in the footsteps of the Nazis who recently decreed a ten-mark monthly grant for every fifth and additional child born into a family which earns 185 marks a month or less. But in the law of June 27, the bolsheviks lag just a bit behind the Nazis: the bonuses begin with the seventh child. Five thousand roubles are to be paid after the tenth instead of after the eleventh baby. Is this the socialist way of bringing more children into the world?

Bolsheviks argue incessantly in favor of more births. They do not contend that more births in the next few years will help the nation in the second world war, assuming it comes. For if it arrives in less than eighteen years, the babies who will owe their existence to the abortion ban

will not yet be able to bear arms. And I do not think the bolsheviks' anti-abortion policy has 1954 in mind. There is more cogency in the statement that modern wars are devastating and that if Russia is engaged in war she will lose many men and should therefore prepare for this eventuality in advance by increasing the birth rate. Soviet spokesmen, too, often seek to justify the big-family propaganda on the ground that the labor scarcity, already a problem, will increase as the nation's industries develop.

In my own view, these considerations are quite subsidiary, yet if repeated often enough with sufficient earnestness, they induce the innocent to overlook the more urgent reasons for family-life reform. The important fact is that the Soviet birth rate is falling. Between 1925 and 1928, according to Robert R. Kuczynski, formerly of the Brookings Institute in Washington, there was a "considerable decrease of the birth rate of European Russia," and especially in the Ukraine, White Russia, Moscow, and Leningrad. Fertility, he shows, is higher in small Soviet cities than in large, and higher in the villages than in small cities. With augmented urbanization since 1929, it is fair to assume that the birth rate is being further retarded. Moscow, which had a birthrate of 30.7 in 1925, dropped to 21.7 in 1929 and 15.3 in 1935. The total population of the territory of the U. S. S. R. increased 19 per cent between 1913 and 1933, but only 12.8 per cent between 1927 and 1933. The net annual increases in the number of inhabitants of the U. S. S. R., moreover, show a general decline since 1929. Thus the excess of births over deaths between 1926 and 1927 was 3,400,000; between 1927 and 1928, 3,600,000; between 1928 and 1929, 3,800,000; but between 1929 and 1930, 3,300,000; between 1930 and 1931, 2,900,000, and in the following two years an average of 2,600,000.

It will be submitted that abortions have much to do with this circumstance. Certainly. But the number of abortions is alarming. V. V. Paevski, in his *Elements of Statistics*, a Soviet publication which appeared in 1931, supplies some of the latest available data for Leningrad. In 1926, there were 43,416 completed pregnancies in that city; in 1927, 40,953, and in 1928, 39,058—this though the total number of inhabitants was increasing owing to internal immigration. In the same three years, however, the number of abortions mounted from 21,646 to 35,523 to 53,562. There were thus more abortions than births. It is not uncommon for a middle-aged Soviet city woman to have had eight or more abortions.

This situation, the authorities realize, must be altered. But they are attacking the problem in the wrong way. I frequently visit the marriage, divorce, birth, and death registration bureaus because they are one of the best contacts with Soviet life. Recently while I sat in one, a woman came in with her two-weeks' old baby. I moved over to her and asked whether she had wanted the child. She said, "Yes," and smiled down affectionately into its face. I then asked whether she would have known what to do to prevent its coming if she had not desired it. She replied, "Of course. We have a son of six, and from his birth till now we had no children."

"And why did you wish to have this baby at this time?"

"You see," she replied, "my husband was promoted and we received a second room."

More rooms, and more diapers, cribs, day nurseries would be the Marxist method of coping with a declining birthrate. If the Soviets want more children they should first create the accommodations for them. And if they think abortions are harmful, as they are in excess, they should increase the popularity of other forms of birth control.

A falling birth rate is, in itself, no cause for great concern. The U. S. S. R.'s total population is rising rapidly. The apparent contradiction is explained by the sharp drop in adult and child mortality. The percentage of child deaths in Czarist Russia was frightful. The change since then has been due, to some extent, to better medical service, living conditions, and infant care. But perhaps the increase in the number of survivors is partly accounted for by the reduction in the number of births per family. The proscription of abortions may raise the birth rate, but it may also raise the mortality rate.

The factor of birth rate played a role in the Soviets' declaration of war on unlimited abortions. There was another, if anything, a better, reason: unrestricted abortions led to laxness of sex life and enabled men to live with young girls and then compel them to submit to abortions. I think the Bolshevik leaders are disturbed by the irregularity of sex relations in the U. S. S. R. This, more than anything else, is what produced the law of June 27, 1936. Suggestions have even been heard to deny legality to unregistered marriages on the ground that they are less likely than registered unions to be lasting. After a costly period of experimentation, the Soviet nation seems to be settling down to more normal sex relations. The chief purpose of the new law is the stabilizing of the family. Theoretically, the Bolsheviks do not accept the family as the inevitable unit of social life. Practically, however, they have never deliberately disrupted the family; there is, as yet, no institution to substitute for it. But Soviet conditions in the past destroyed many families—the two generations which it always embraces were frequently at political and economic loggerheads. Today, that phase is ended. The family in the U. S. S. R. will be strengthened. Now and then, indeed, Soviet organs begin to point out that the insecurity of bourgeois countries is undermining the family.

It is natural, accordingly, that the law should contain provisions regarding divorce and alimony. "In order," it reads, "to fight against a frivolous attitude toward the family and family obligations," both parties to a marriage are to be summoned by the registrar before a divorce is granted. Divorce in the absence of one party whose first notification might be an official postcard disappears. Moreover, the cost of divorces is raised. Hitherto, the fee has been three roubles. The law fixes it at 50 roubles for the first divorce, 100 for the second, and 300 for the third and subsequent divorces.

These arrangements, when they appeared in the draft, did not please many commentators. Although one person would have put the divorce fee still higher as a punishment, she wrote, "for those who regard marriage frivo-

lously," a wife said she would pay for the divorce if her husband wanted to leave her and had not enough money. Moreover, innumerable letters to the press stated that these increased charges would create no difficulties for the better paid but would make divorce less accessible to the poor. Some, accordingly, urged that the cost of divorce be in proportion to income. Who pays for the divorce? others asked. The draft was silent on this point. So is the law. The law, in fact, turns a deaf ear to all the constructive criticism and helpful suggestions about divorce which came from the masses in the course of the discussion.

If the working of the law on divorce leaves much to be desired, the provisions about alimony are quite deplorable. The draft devoted only four over-simplified lines to this highly complicated problem. It proposed that 33 1/3 per cent of a father's salary go to the divorced mother with one child, 50 per cent if there were two children, 60 per cent for three or more children. The law reduces these percentages to 25 per cent, 33 1/3 per cent, and 50 per cent respectively; but here again the excellent ideas brought out in the discussion were completely ignored by the government. Alimony in the Soviet Union is never designed for the support of ex-wives. A childless divorcee is not entitled to alimony. Alimony is only for children. But 25 per cent of a man's salary may be much more than one child requires. Alimony, in such cases, can become a business.

A woman is left with a child. She soon marries a prosperous second husband. She may not need very much alimony, yet her first husband, if he has to pay her 25 per cent of his salary, may be handicapped, during the eighteen-year alimony period, in creating a second family. If he earned 400 roubles, 100 would go to the one child of the first marriage and only 300 would remain for himself, his second wife, and their three or four or more children. Flat alimony percentages will give rise to unfairness, many protested. What was the sense, people asked further, in sending a man to prison for the non-payment of alimony? In jail he earned too little money and his children would merely suffer. Was there no other method of forcing him to meet his obligations? G. Elkin, judge of the Moscow high court, stated in the *Izvestia* that "court experience showed that questions of alimony could not be decided mechanically." One child receiving alimony is well, for instance, he said. Another is ill. An individual approach is necessary, he stated, in each case. The courts or special commissions ought to have this matter in hand. A district attorney reminded the government that the age of children should also play a role in fixing alimony. Did the lawmakers read these letters in the press? There is no sign in the final law that they did.

A host of personal tragedies will flow from this law. "Bootleg" abortion clinics will kill and cripple women. A hysterical cry will go up from women who will knock at door after door seeking an abortion permit. The youth will suffer. Perhaps, before many months have elapsed, the wailing and misery will compel the U. S. S. R.'s first Parliament to repeal this unjustifiable act at its first session in 1937. That would redeem Soviet democracy.

(*Mr. Fischer's first article on the new Soviet abortion law appeared last week.*)

Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

FOR the first time I have had to ask myself whether the President is losing his political skill and intuition. His decision not to accept Postmaster Farley's resignation, but merely to give him a leave until after the election, seems like a first-class political blunder. I have no doubt that it is due to a feeling that he must be loyal to the man who has done his political work for him and taken a lot of blame that belongs upon other shoulders. But if, as the newspapers reported, he gave the leave of absence in the belief that that would be sufficient to allay the popular feeling against Farley and Farleyism, the President is quite mistaken. It is a pity that he cannot visit incognito some of our best moving-picture houses and hear for himself the whole-hearted hisses and boos with which the Postmaster General is greeted when his picture is thrown on the screen. It will not in any way mitigate the force of the Republican attacks upon Farley and what he typifies if he is on temporary leave and certain to return to the Cabinet if the President wins another term. That the Republicans are hypocritical in getting after Farley is obvious. The party of Mark Hanna and Matt Quay and Will Hays and Walter Brown and all of the Ohio gang has the nerve of a brass monkey to criticize anybody for playing politics when in the Cabinet. What has happened is that the public has grown more sensitive to the spoils system and that it is outraged by Farley's holding three jobs, that of National Democratic Chairman, New York State Chairman, and Postmaster General. Never before was so much political patronage concentrated in the hands of one man. I believe that the President will pay heavily for this in lost votes.

Doubtless the President may feel that he is showing courage and independence by refusing to give up Farley in the face of what he considers unjust criticism. Well, it is not unjust criticism of this set-up. On the contrary the public dissatisfaction about it, which I believe would continue if the Republicans should drop all mention of the Postmaster General, denotes a healthy public concern which ought to be heeded. Here is a case where it would not only be astute and good politics to listen to the voice of the people but would be raising the standards of government. It is not as if the President were going to have an easy walk-over and were therefore in a position to ignore widespread criticism. I have the growing feeling that he has got to fight hard to win. I do not base this upon the recent poll of the Institute of Public Opinion. His strength is with labor which rarely shows in a poll of the *Literary Digest* type. It cannot be denied that if the Lemke ticket is put in the field it is going to draw enough votes in some states, Connecticut, for instance, to make the state extremely doubtful for the President. Aside from that, in

this election the attack will center on Mr. Roosevelt himself. So many Republicans voted for the original New Deal measures that the Democrats have some extremely effective ammunition in waiting. Hence Mr. Roosevelt is the safest target. He will have to defend himself against charges from all quarters notably with regard to the administrative weakness of his administration.

Under the circumstances what would seem to be the best policy for him? Not only taking the offensive but making clear-cut, straightforward statements as to where he is heading and what he proposes to do. If it is answered that it would be manifestly unfair to ask him to bind himself in these times when it is impossible to foresee what may be the economic future in this country or the political one abroad, the answer is that whether it is fair or unfair if Mr. Landon knows his business he will put to the forefront of every address some specific questions to the President which will have to be categorically answered or else ignored with unfortunate effects. It would be a great deal better to spike Landon's guns by as elaborate a program as possible. That will be especially difficult for Mr. Roosevelt because it is so contrary to his habit of mind. It may be impossible for him to do anything of this kind; I am only indicating what, in my judgment, a master strategist, sure of his ground, ought to do.

Certainly the President must be more specific than he was at Franklin Field. I find my first impressions of that address confirmed by many talks I have had about it since with a few of those who heard it over the radio. They invariably tell me that it lacked details and that it did not carry conviction with it. But the President must be able to arouse and to inspire if he is going to win. The great employers of this country are going to try to bring more influence to bear upon their workmen than ever before. The Administration is well aware of this danger—I was asked by a subordinate in Washington to suggest any way of heading this off. My answer was that nothing can be done to prevent a manufacturer's saying in a crowded elevator to some of his men, "Well, boys, if Roosevelt wins I'll have to close down." He may sincerely think so. I know one who does and he voted for Roosevelt four years ago. Does not this reinforce the point that this danger can only be met by the President's laying all the cards on the table? He has brought back from their posts almost every ambassador and minister to campaign for him. That is nothing new. Hoover did the same thing. But the Roosevelt diplomats might just as well have stayed abroad. They cannot win the election or aid in any worthwhile degree. Only Franklin Roosevelt can win or lose it—can win it only if he is frank, straightforward, sincere, and convincing, and comprehensive in outlining what he will do if reelected.

BROUN'S PAGE

THE Townsendite convention in Cleveland may number among its successes the fact that it roused Henry L. Mencken from his lethargy and inspired him to write with much of his old gusto. Indeed most of the newspapermen who covered the gathering turned out highly readable and amusing copy. And yet I missed one thing in the reports. I saw little note taken of the fact that this was one of the most tragic assemblies of the year. One saw the logical and hopeful courses of human aspiration channeled into the gutters. Here was an object lesson in the highly unfortunate circumstance that mankind under pressure tends to seek the comfort of the father image. At least Freud would call it that. In its political implications the tendency is known as fascism.

Like troops who have been in the line too long the legions of the underprivileged turn for comfort to the nearest brass-hat. The fiber of the rank and file has been worn away. Out of their own potential strength they find it difficult to conjure up salvation. They clutch at Father Coughlin.

Of late it has become fashionable in radical circles to say that the good cause is better off without great orators and flaming personalities. Such figures are better left to the romantic who do not understand the vital truth that the mass always makes the leader. This is a dangerous half truth. No leader of any type can get much ahead of his support. Even Mussolini and Hitler hold power by performing their sleight-of-hand stunts before the multitude. But the true prophets should not become high hat. They must, perforce, compete with the priests of Baal somewhat along the lines laid down traditionally for the swaying of the multitude. It is up to the radicals to find within their ranks men who can use the radio more effectively than Father Coughlin, and the red clay parishes of Louisiana cannot forever be left to the Huey Longs and the Gerald Smiths.

To be sure, Earl Browder was more than ready to put in an appearance at Cleveland and Norman Thomas, who wangled an invitation as the lesser of left evils, was gallant in his courage when he faced a hostile audience. The fact that Mr. Thomas was not able to qualify as a veritable Elijah and show up the impotence of the tribal deities should not be scored against his ability as an orator. It was a tough spot. The convention was stacked against him. And yet, judging from rather fragmentary reports, his approach might have been somewhat more inspired. It is not sufficient to tell the Townsendites and the Coughlinites that the panaceas which have won them are unworkable. The case goes deeper. I think it is fair to say that even if every claim made by Coughlin were true and the revolving plan of Dr. Townsend quite easy of arrangement, the goals set by these gentlemen would still be all too insufficient. Certainly the trouble with the Cleveland groups is that as yet they are far too conserva-

tive. They want a new world without the pangs of childbirth.

One can go back of Dr. Townsend and Father Coughlin to the credulous days of the Hoover boom. No worker should ever be ready to sell his hope of the cooperative commonwealth for a way station in which chickens are to be found in every pot. Suppose the Townsend plan were practical and that it served to solve the problem of social security for the aged; would it not still leave us with crying perplexities in front of us? I do not remember that any speaker in the great hall took up the question of liberating American children from the mill and factory.

Ironically enough there was hardly a hint of the existence of class consciousness among the Townsendites, the Coughlinites, and the eight million bull frogs who have been organized, according to Gomer Smith, into share-the-wealth clubs of the Reverend Gerald Smith. Who was there in all the hall to speak of war and its creation by international rivalries? The only answer furnished was in the Lemke platform of complete isolation and 200 per cent nationalism which at the moment keeps all Europe under arms.

The Townsendites, I know, take great stock in their own respectability. They shudder at the word communism and they are easy prey for the red-baiting tactics of Father Coughlin. I do not know whether or not Thomas said it, but he should have hailed the delegates as "fellow revolutionists." I understand he did point out that the sort of social security for which they were asking would not be possible under the capitalist system. Sooner or later the Townsendites and the Coughlinites will learn that their leaders are promising them nothing more than an orange in the toe of a stocking. What they really want is a revolving world and not a revolving pension plan.

Even the Townsendites must come of age in time. It is comforting to believe that the whole scheme of economic inequity can be turned out overnight. It is pleasant to believe that it is possible to step right out of the ashes into a coach and four. But there isn't really any Fairy Godmother. Man gets what he needs by fighting and by organization. Some of the speeches made by the priests and preachers at Cleveland sounded beguiling. A fine feast of pie was spread in the sky by Coughlin and by Smith. But let these workers take heed when they return home and observe the passing of the days and the months and the dwindling of their hopes.

Townsendites will get precisely nowhere as long as they continue to think of themselves as safe and sane and the salt of the earth. As such they have lost their savor. They are red pepper or nothing. The next convention of these groups should be carried on without Coughlin, Lemke, Smith, or Townsend. And if it is to end right it will begin with the singing of the International.

HEYWOOD BROWN

BOOKS *and the* ARTS

BELIEFS IN POETRY

BY HORACE GREGORY

WITHIN the past five years we have had many promises of a hope for a new literature, a new poetry. The promise is all the more dramatic because as recently as 1930 such responsible critics as Newton Arvin and H. L. Mencken (both from extremely different points of view) found the best writing of our time crabbed, "obscure," introverted, sad, thin, despairing. Then, as now, it was said (and I think carelessly) that we were living in a time of transition. It would be better to say that our contemporaries have been and still are abnormally self-conscious. Even those who had not read Freud had absorbed his influence, quite as Matthew Arnold once wrote of Byron, "our soul had *felt* him." They had become conscious of themselves, of the world they lived in, of their beliefs (or what was once called the lack of them). Look how watchful, how aware they were in the first decade following the war:

And I myself on a swiftly tilting planet
Stand before a glass and tie my tie.

Freud was by no means the least considerable of the influences then at work among the writers. His power lay in his appeal to the literary imagination; through his analysis of the nerve-shocked individual who feared, more than all else, complete loss of personal identity, emerged the figure of the Greek King Oedipus. The powerful resurgence of the old myth gave tragic dignity to individual despair; it was a prop (to those who could afford expensive treatment) against the impulse toward suicide, against the individual temptation to re-enact the mass-destruction of the World War. To those who were unable to purchase such consolations the tragedy became the very lack of individual tragedy in modern life: "I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be," yet in each case the self-consciousness remained.

The obverse of Senlin's face before the mirror was that cult of anti-intellectualism which fled the process of self-examination as a science, but embraced it as a necessary esthetic. This counter-movement we may trace through the later plays of Eugene O'Neill, through an entire phase of D. H. Lawrence, and the authors of the new autobiographies—the John Middleton Murrys, the Saroyans, and last of all, Thomas Wolfe. If we re-read the minor poetry of the earlier period, we shall not fail to notice recurrent images of death, of dryness, impotence, of bone, of brain, of emptiness, of ice. I need not repeat the reasons why we tended to distrust the uses of "belief" during this period. Mr. I. A. Richards's "Principles of Literary Criticism" is a reliable index to that distrust, and the significant poetry of that movement will continue to bear witness to the flaws and merits of his criticism. We were certain then only of

what seemed a belief in non-belief, a paradox which proved too ingenious, too fragile to endure beyond the hour.

Today, however, the stress is toward images of positive belief, of life, of rebirth, of machinery in motion, of re-awakened earth in spring, of men marching together: "Oh comrades step beautifully from the solid wall," of love, of hope: "New styles of architecture, a change of heart." We have come a long way in an opposite direction from post- (if not in fact pre-) war consciousness. It is to our good fortune that promise of a new vitality in poetry has been sustained by the writers of the left, who, as Granville Hicks reminds us, are the inheritors of a great tradition in literature. But beyond this healthy show of confidence, we must be prepared to protect the renewal of our hopes from the weedy growths of a too facile optimism. We must be watchful lest the revival of belief will not employ the mere assertion of beliefs as a barrage to conceal our fears of analysis and correction. We must inquire into the nature of poetic belief itself, by discriminating between what is false and what is true in literature, and by examining the *meaning* of belief in religion, politics, science, and all of those categories which seem to disintegrate the character of daily experience; and to perform that operation without killing the patient we must move toward a synthesis. No chart will plot the course for us—unless we are willing to accept a shallow world of contradictory responsibilities, that is, re-affirm the confusions of the present *status quo*. It is this conviction which must be confidently preserved if we are to learn anything from the errors and successes of our contemporaries.

It must be borne in mind that poetic belief, in the sense here employed, is a cultural term, with its associations reaching backward through a discontinuous heritage to the sources of a mythology. In this connection M. Paul Valéry, whose acid candor resembles the blandest naivete, once remarked: "Works endure as long as they are of use. That is why they are discontinuous." It is not tradition as opposed to absence of tradition that makes for literary controversy; it is always the choice of *which* tradition is most desirable.

Mr. Stephen Spender in "The Destructive Element" has made an eloquent, and I think, necessary claim for the heritage of the Symbolist technic in the new Left literature. Its usefulness was demonstrated by Hart Crane when he attempted to telescope the road home to American mythology, when he sought to redefine within the eight short sections of "The Bridge" the total meaning of his cultural experience. Crane's evocations of Powhatan's daughter, Cutty Sark, Walt Whitman, Columbus, Edgar Poe, Rip

Van Winkle, Kitty Hawk—all contained within the symbol of his own time, Brooklyn Bridge—were legitimate ambiguities of poetic belief. Through them Crane had no need to justify the psychic horror of what might otherwise have been a mere personal experience as he rode the New York I. R. T. in "The Tunnel." In one passage of the poem he conceived of that experience (crossing under water between Brooklyn and Manhattan) as death by water transformed into subway suicide. Through rapid association we are given "Whose body smokes along the bitten rails?" Poe's death in Baltimore, then from Poe's "The City in the Sea," the "death that looks gigantically down." It was primarily through Poe that Crane merged his identity with one of the sources of American belief, an experience whose realistic horror (as Mr. Paul Elmer More observes) was a heritage Poe gained from the witch-burning, "Day of Doom" Puritans. Hart Crane revived and preserved for us that moment of vision, the penultimate sensation, which is both the weakness and the strength of all romantic poetry.

So far as he was able to merge his identity with the identity of an indigenous myth, "The Bridge" was successful. Crane's failure was a failure to recognize the sharp limits of his cultural heritage, to recognize that it was *not* continuous, that no one can embrace *all* elements of his cultural beliefs at *one* time, in *one* symbol. When moments of vision failed him, he was then thrown back upon the resources of what to him remained an imperfect technic, a defect which is also discernible in Shelley and Thomas Lovell Beddoes. Thus, Shelley's tendency was to overload eighteenth century humanitarianism with platonic meaning, which was quickly understood if one read his notes, but remained obscure if one did not. Beddoes's defect, on the other hand, arose from the perception of all forms of life as *death*. All were to be contained within a single ambitious work, a play, "Death's Jest Book," and it is hardly to be wondered that the play failed in its attempt at such a synthesis.

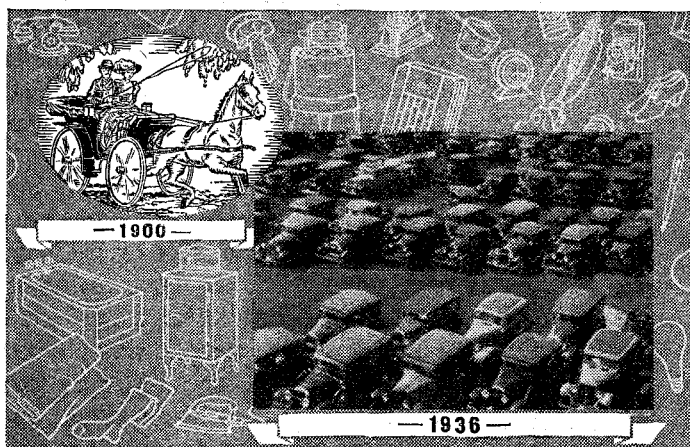
The most conspicuous failure to create a synthesis in our time is to be found in the forty-one "Cantos" of Mr. Ezra Pound. (This is not to deny the excellence of a few "Cantos," four in particular, "Cantos" I, XVII, XXX, and XXXVI.) The particular "belief" given expression in these fragments stems directly from the main-stream of Greco-Roman culture as it entered the Renaissance and was in turn absorbed by the Anglo-American tradition in literature. As long as these fragments of the Greco-Roman myth may be grafted to the roots of our own culture, they remain relevant to our own beliefs in poetry. We have, however, some thirty-odd "Cantos" that are related to scattered myths and beliefs, few of which are vital to the growth of the language, or to any other instrument of belief existing in our time. If we call them "meaningless," we mean that their beliefs are untenable, that to us their *language* is inadequate. The obscene language of "Cantos" XV and XXXIX is a confession of technical inadequacy; the many inaccurate uses of American slang is further confession of the same failure. Because he fails to discriminate in his choices of poetic beliefs, Mr. Pound seems perennially immoral; for this reason his failures to distinguish

between the beliefs of Mussolini and Thomas Jefferson seem no more than a personal aberration, a refusal to keep his eye on the "object." It is significant that in his last "Cantos" published in magazines, his quarrel with the beliefs of his contemporaries has at last reduced him to a quarrel with his own medium.

Now, no one will deny that there is a conflict of technics as well as of beliefs in modern poetry; but if we are to move toward an actual synthesis we must regard beliefs and technics as related aspects of the same mythology. Something of the nature of this conflict has been indicated by Kenneth Burke in his essay on symbolic warfare in the current issue of "The Southern Review." At the present time there is to be noted a peculiarly self-conscious awe in the presence of machinery on the part of younger poets. Such self-consciousness too often takes the form of what Mr. C. Day Lewis calls "adventitious energy" in poetry; but what lies behind the uses of adventitious energy is even more dangerous. It implies (through half-denial) that an actual quarrel exists between poetry and science, and even Mr. Day Lewis is, I think, too willing to admit that poetry was born from magic and *science is the great enemy of magic*.

From here onward we are likely to confuse the specific terms of belief in science with those of belief in poetry; and here at once we embroil ourselves in an old and somewhat tedious controversy. We add to it, moreover, the mistaken notion that the introduction of machine images in poetry is of very recent origin (which is like the assumption that we oppose tradition with the lack of tradition). We are led to forget that Chapman and Dekker used images of sixteenth century war machinery, that Lord Herbert of Cherbury once wrote a memorable poem to his watch. It was their very lack of uneasiness in assimilating the uses of machine imagery that saved them from the charge of appearing adventitious. What we must accept, is the fact that there are as many ways of writing badly about the machine as there are ways of ineptly describing natural phenomena. To imply that there is lasting and deep warfare between poetry and science is to consider work that is properly beneath notice; and to carry that implication to its extreme conclusion is to say that poetry has become increasingly difficult to write ever since the invention of the wheel.

I do not mean to suggest that a renewed discussion of the meaning of meaning will refute those who tend to inflate the necessity of belief in poetry. My suggestion is to measure the distance we have traveled, by reevaluating our literary past as it emerges into the present: to re-examine the worth of recent literary revivals in terms of their contribution to the writing of our time: to recover for our time the discipline implicit in the major poetry of John Milton. It is to be understood that such a program must not be too ambitious. And it is also to be hoped that the beliefs as well as the technics of the new poetry will be tested by a criterion as modest and severe as Friedrich Engel's explanation of the new language that came into being with the writing of "Das Kapital": "Every new aspect of a science involves a revolution in the technical terms of that science."



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BOOKS

A Poetic View of the Naturalists

GREEN LAURELS, THE LIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GREAT NATURALISTS. By Donald Culross Peattie. Simon and Schuster. \$3.75.

MR. PEATTIE, who is a naturalist of some note and who has earned an enviable reputation as a writer of "singing prose" about nature, has undertaken in this book to give a humanized history of the naturalists' contribution to biology. In fifteen short chapters comprising altogether about 350 pages of large-type text, he traces successively the work of the mediaeval schoolmen and herbalists, the contributions of the early microscopists of the seventeenth century, natural history at the court of Louis XV as exemplified by Buffon and Réaumur, the life and times of the great Linnaeus (three chapters), the precocious evolutionism of Lamarck (two chapters), the work of the relatively little-known wilderness plantmen, birdsmen and natural historians in America of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (three chapters), the rose-tinted speculations of Goethe, Darwinism (two chapters), and finally the peculiar contribution of Henri Fabre with his remarkable descriptions of the habits of insects.

From this summary enumeration it will be obvious that Mr. Peattie's book does not compete with those intensive popularizations of science which seek to give the reader a rich lode of information in a single volume. Linnaeus, Lamarck and Darwin account for half the book, and the rest of the space is by no means portioned out among the next greatest naturalists, but is rather devoted to those whose work can be presented in an interesting setting. Even so one wonders why Gregor Mendel, whose work is both important and pastorally interesting, was left out of Mr. Peattie's book. Doubtless the explanation is that this is not intended to be a complete and exhaustive work about the history of naturalism; but a book short enough to be written throughout at a high pitch of literary craftsmanship.

For Mr. Peattie's book, even if it does not compete with the more encyclopedic popularizations and text books, has indeed its own remarkable merits. There is not a line which is not dramatically vivid and entertaining. The book can be read like a novel at moments of relaxation when the usual work on science would fag the attention. And holding the attention it does manage to convey ideas which are both true and valuable.

The only exception is the constant harping on the poetic beauties and marvels of Nature and the identification of these beauties with the scientific knowledge of the naturalist. "In Nature," we are told, "nothing is insignificant, nothing ignoble, nothing sinful, nothing repetitious. All the music is great music, all the lines have meaning." And we are also repeatedly told that from the naturalists we receive "a reflection of the immense reality they behold." It cannot be too much emphasized, however, that the esthetic viewpoint on Nature, even though it is so often the origin of our scientific interest in the biological kingdom, is out of place in the scientific picture. To the poetic naturalist Nature may be perfect, but not to the analytic scientist. Helmholtz, for example, delighted in piling up a huge list of imperfections in the eye as an optical

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instrument. Doctors find the vermiform appendix a nuisance rather than a blessing.

And yet Mr. Peattie concludes his book with a hymn to the naturalist, whom he identifies with the poetic naturalist, leaving all the analytic science to be carried on by the laboratory biologist. The hymn is all the more puzzling in that he has the naturalist "make a certain amount of submission toward the findings of the laboratory"; yet he is master in his own house, the mansion of the earth, where alone "are sunset glow, green leaf and eyes to see them: here is all we know of reality, all-sufficient to our destiny, our thoughts and passions. There will never be truer interpreters than the naturalists of this beloved, dusty, struggling, fateful and illustrious experiment called life on earth."

The confusion clears up of course if we take this as mere hyperbole, as the poetic license of an author enthusiastic over his subject matter. And with the caution that such passages on the beauty of nature and the vision of the naturalist are to be regarded as more poetry than scientific truth, Mr. Peattie's book can be safely and properly recommended to a wide circle of readers.

BENJAMIN GINZBURG

Competition Goes West

THE DECLINE OF COMPETITION: A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN INDUSTRY. By Arthur Robert Burns. McGraw-Hill Book Company. \$5.

ARTHUR BURNS has called his book the "Decline of Competition." A solid tome from a crusader for fascism or communism might be dismissed as an extravagant flight of wishful thinking. But if an ancient institution which imposed the laws of Nature—and of Nature's god—upon workaday activity has gone astray, it is not at his impious touch. As a spectator only, he has viewed the surging show from the sidelines, snapped a veritable multitude of close-ups, noted departures from correct industrial behavior, and set down an adventurous story subdued to a scholar's prose. If competition is headed West, it is because industrial activities have failed to abide by the rules which the books have set down for them.

It is evident enough—from within these pages and without—that competition is not what it once was. The trim lines of the affair of old had no place for basing points, phantom freight, the patent pool, a price resting upon a handful of "as if's." Its marching argument was not stayed by overhead cost, the open-price file, the tempo of technology, the chameleon antics of the corporation, the lawful evasion of the law. Its balanced order was not disturbed by the "institute" of sugar or steel, the agreement among gentlemen, the Christian respect for the other fellow's market, the great fellowship in commercial faith. In the grand series of close-ups which Arthur Burns has taken, it doesn't resemble its likeness in the picture-books. But is competition actually in eclipse? Or is it coming as well as going? Or is it assuming strange forms? Or is the familiar likeness, after all, only a spurious portrait?

Competition never did look quite like its picture. The authentic portrait is a glorified abstraction of the ways of petty trade. There are, apart from Euclid, many geometries; and there can be as many competitions as variations can be rung on a set of reasonable assumptions. Among small trades the maker of men's shirts, the fashioner of house dresses, and the mendicant of waste paper ply unlike acquisitive arts. The struggle of corner grocers for neighborhood trade and the rivalry of a million small cotton planters in a world market are quite different things. It is the alchemy of method which transmutes

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distinctive usages into universal laws, and imposes upon rich-
ness of texture a geometrical design.

If competition is entrenched in small enterprise, it has not
lost its peculiar domain. The internal combustion engine is as
much a symbol of the times as giant power; and, if there is a
wicked trend toward the big and bad, there is also a virtuous
urge toward the little and the good. The Census Reports have
done a fair job at keeping the small fellows alive. The NRA,
when it had to choose, usually gave small enterprise preferment
over efficiency. The penny razor blade is now decentralizing
production into nifty little factories. Almost within a month
the major oil companies, tiring of white elephants, have rid
themselves of their retail outlets. The chain stores may pres-
ently feel the pulverizing blow of the Patman Act. But small-
ness is no insurance of goodness. Ice is a declining industry;
yet its prices have little respect for the costs which make them
up, and in widely scattered markets the tolls which consumers
must pay are strikingly uniform.

Nor does bigness always take the primrose path toward
monopoly. A set of arrangements which no one could have
foreseen has allowed different prices to be charged for iden-
tical quarts of milk, yet distributors heroically battle for cus-
tomers. The automobile is produced by colossal concerns; yet
the result of a calculation from an elaborate formula is scrapped
overnight to better a competitor's price. The oil "octopus" of
kerosene was a pigmy compared with the gasoline giants who
currently struggle for gallonage. Among them price-change
is too dangerous a mechanism to use in an adjustment of de-
mand and supply—as the independents can well testify. A
public authority, in a drastic reduction of passenger fares, has
just imposed upon the railroads a belated recognition of their
competition with motor carriers. Any monogamous student,
who is true to his industry, will loudly assert that his lady love
is distinctive above all others—and confidentially admit that
she is a little queer.

Although his eye is for his own selection, Arthur Burns's
book is filled with stuff as real as this. The bother is that it is
all seen through a slightly darkened glass of scholarship. Con-
cept and problem are too neatly chiseled for the turbulent
world to which they belong. A trade practice—open price
filing, patent monopoly, quality competition—is too easily de-
tached from the scheme of arrangements which give individ-
uality to an industry, and is sent across a dozen frontiers to
reappear as an abstraction. Our state of ignorance commands
that we take time to distinguish industries before we indulge
the luxury of integration; yet his urge to generalization, more
manifest in line of argument than in conclusion, is not always
held in leash. The childish pedantry of monopoly, duopoly,
oligopoly does not obtrude; but the author is disposed to set
down prevailing practices as way-stations on the broad high-
way that stretches from "perfect" competition to monopoly.
Another person might have suited his manner to the very life
of his subject; it is Arthur Burns's method, not his material,
which has imposed upon the best book we have yet had on the
changing ways of business an unproved thesis.

The ruthless course of events hurries the industrial system
toward an unknown future. It is not spinning down the
grooves of change; the detail which makes it up is forever
being transformed. To assess prevailing arrangements as cases
of perfect competition tainted with collusion or streaked with
monopoly is to miss their character. Competition is not "per-
fect"—and prone like theological man to go astray. As recep-
tacles for facts competition and monopoly invite a miscellany
of meaning. The organization of an industry is a cluster of
usages; its changing elements may be put together in innumer-

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able patterns. Its arrangements may invite concentration or diffusion of power—or even put larger questions of control out of human reach; it may distribute discretion over different matters in quite different ways. But an antithesis of competition and monopoly is too simple a formula with which to capture the colorful and dramatic realities of industrial change.

Erring industry has strayed far—as appraised by a perfect competition which reflects the usages of petty trade. But is competition in decline? Who knows? Or is there any such question?

WALTON H. HAMILTON

Star Vehicle

THE OLD MAN'S COMING. By Gösta Gustaf-Janson.
Translated from the Swedish by Claude Napier. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.75.

THE impresarios of the late nineteenth century were fond of building their plays as star-vehicles for a personality, planting the opening scenes with rumors of his virtues and vices and, after an appropriate lapse of time, ushering him on the boards with a declamation. Something of the same formula occurs in "The Old Man's Coming," but Gösta Gustaf-Janson has made the fatal error of employing a theatrical device without accepting the restraints upon which it depends for its effectiveness. The novel concerns the mysterious return of the master of a great house after twenty years of absence, and as such is ideally contrived for treatment in the flamboyant genre. The author has been more than a little successful in piecing together the character of his absent protagonist from scraps of information dropped at intervals over the family dinner table, in the servants' quarters, and from the mouths of children. When suspense has been kindled to boiling point, however—which is not particularly far up the thermometric scale—the reader is left to pocket his curiosity while skeins of intrigue are tangled and untangled and suspense gives way to a garden variety of irritation. Not until the concluding eighty pages of this 494-page volume does Charles-Henri de Grévy, "the master of Holinge, the grisly, legendary figure of Kvidanso parish," make his grand entry; and though he appears at the height of a squall, in a volley of snapping tree-trunks and flying tiles, his "coming" does not exact a tithe of its due in goose-flesh.

From certain allusions to communism, fascism, and the All Swedish Nationalist-Socialist Fighting Party (Nazi offshoot in Sweden) it is possible to read between the lines of this novel an abortive allegory of human idealism pitted against individual covetousness and falsity. Certainly it is symbolic that young Bengt paints out a rain spot on his ceiling because it suggests the contours of a Jewish profile, only to discover that at each fresh downpour the spot assumes the same shape and is plainly visible through the paint. That the Old Man himself is, in part at least, saddled to a symbol of selfless world-brotherhood becomes painfully apparent during the closing chapters, at which time he rises to deliver a series of sermons on this general theme and, in spite of earlier generosity to his assembled friends and relatives, is betrayed by them all.

If the intention has been to project such a parable, rather than, as the present reviewer is inclined to believe, to provide the story with a frame of synthetic contemporary reference, Mr. Gustaf-Janson has twice missed his mark. Not only is he guilty of poor showmanship in the handling of a theatrical device, but somewhere among the gothic incrustations of omens, ogres, squalls, and ghouls, the trysts in barns and the confrontations in drawing-rooms, he has lost touch completely with reality.

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Portrait Without an Attitude

THEODORE PARKER: YANKEE CRUSADER. By Henry Steele Commager. Little, Brown, and Company. \$3.

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER'S fascinating "Theodore Parker: Yankee Crusader" has the virtues and defects of the Gamaliel Bradford school of historical portraiture: it leaves one with a strong impression of the kinetic energy of a remarkable man (which is to say that it succeeds as art), yet it never comes to grips with the uses to which the energy is put (and so it fails as criticism.) Since it avoids all questions of value, it might be called an example of the roar-machine theory of biography: so many degrees registered of intellectual intensity, of moral passion, of querulousness, of Yankee colloquialism, of sarcasm and occasional amiability, but no place on the scale for a judgment on Parker's worth and effectiveness, on the non-conformist New England conscience, on the duties of a Boston Golden Day scholar faced with the relative claims of original research and contemporary demands for popularization, on the method of the Abolitionists, on the institution of slavery itself. The result is a picture in which lineament and limb stand vivid, but connect with no very meaningful historical background, no foreground sloping to the present.

If it is Parker himself that you want, he is here, as Lexington farmer boy, as divinity student, as transcendentalist echo of German idealistic philosophy, as leader of a schism within the schism of Unitarianism, as friend of Fourierists, Brook Farmers, Swedenborgians and Temperance lecturers, as a Universal Reformer in his own right, and, finally, as the great Abolitionist preacher who took the gospel of William Lloyd Garrison into the pulpits and on to the lyceum stages of a hundred towns throughout New England, the Middle Atlantic states, and the Middle West. Mr. Commager has done all that he has set out to do, and done it superlatively well. Parker advising Herndon (and so reaching Lincoln); Parker pronouncing the awful judgment on Daniel Webster for succumbing to State Street and working for the compromise of the Fugitive Slave law; Parker making his own bookshelves; Parker collecting toy bears for his wife; Parker dying in Italy, exhausted at forty-nine, calling piteously for a last year's apple; Parker, the scholar and linguist who never had time to do the learned work which he should have done; Parker, whom women mothered and men abused—all of the attributes and facets of the great preacher and popularizer of the Forties and the Fifties are in Mr. Commager's rippling pages. And Mr. Commager's summary in a final chapter of Parker's personal qualities and quirks is a little masterpiece of distillation.

Yet the net effect is one of disappointment. It is supposedly a good rule never to criticize an author for not doing something which he has deliberately excluded from his plan, yet Mr. Commager's profession of temporary agnosticism in the face of the social forces that moved Parker is unconvincing. Most people go to biography for two things: subject and attitude. And when an author deliberately tries to exclude his attitude one has a right to feel let down and to suspect ulterior motives. If Mr. Commager had passed judgment one way or another on the Abolitionists; if he had speculated on the validity of the doctrine of the Higher Law or the Inner Light, if he had explained precisely wherein Parker traduced Daniel Webster—if, in brief, he had taken a position, he would have been compelled willy nilly to give his book the perspective it now lacks. There is more perspective in the sixteen pages devoted to the anti-Slavery writers in Van Wyck Brooks's forthcoming "The

Flowering of New England" than in Mr. Commager's whole book. The reason is that Mr. Brooks is not afraid to think through to a point of view.

The question facing Mr. Commager is this: If the Abolitionists and the Fire-eaters of the North in the 1850's had not pressed the issue and so increased the blood-pressure of the Southern Fire-eaters, would slavery have been eradicated eventually without war, without the hatred of the Reconstruction and the Bloody Shirt? Many liberal Southerners are fond of saying that Slavery was doomed because it was uneconomic, and that it would have eventually withered away. They therefore regard the Fire-eaters as meddlers who caused a useless conflict. Yet since the Civil War was not fought over the peculiar institution itself, but came as a by-product of two colliding imperialisms, neither of which could be headed, I think the Fire-eaters, Parker included, were the ones who knew in their bones what the future was to bring forth. The South had to grasp for new slave territory, the North had to reach for new free markets at the western railheads. Civilizations don't draw back from their objectives of their own accord. And Parker and Garrison, Herndon and Lincoln, were the agents of the advance of the Northern free-labor civilization.

If Mr. Commager had tried to answer the major question posed by the life of Parker, his book would have had more meaning for the present. For between the situation that faced the generation of Garrison and Wendell Phillips and the situation that faces the generation of John L. Lewis, there is a rough analogy. Now, as before, two imperialisms, running on irresistible momentum, face collision. There is much to be learned from the life of Parker that has contemporary application. One wishes that Mr. Commager had drawn the parallels; one wishes that he had more curiosity about the approximate laws of history. His book is first-rate Gamaliel Bradford stuff; but Gamaliel Bradford was a lesser New Englander, not of the breed of the Parkers and the Emersons, who always sought the generality underlying the particular.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Time and Mind

THE PURITAN PRONAO. STUDIES IN THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF NEW ENGLAND IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By Samuel Eliot Morison. New York: University Press. \$3.75.

THE ENCHANTED GLASS. THE ELIZABETHAN MIND IN LITERATURE. By Hardin Craig. Oxford University Press. \$2.50.

MR. MORISON and Mr. Craig have undertaken an all but impossible task. The definition of another age in terms of its thought—in terms, say, of the Elizabethan or the Puritan "mind"—is especially difficult if one assumes that the human mind was a different thing then from what it is now. Neither Mr. Morison nor Mr. Craig makes this assumption crudely, yet it must have stood behind the necessity each one of them felt to explain his favorite generation. And it still stands behind a certain strangeness which those generations take on in two books designed instead to make them look and sound familiar.

It is almost true that the more a given time is explained the remoter it grows; whereas the contrary assumption that there is nothing to explain keeps it comfortably close to the point where our imaginations can work at it naturally. This is no less true of our own time, which I have seen made absolutely unrecognizable in books whose charitable purpose was to give us

Letters to the Editors

CANDIDATE FOR THE HONOR ROLL

Dears Sirs: The June 24 session of the Democratic National Convention was opened with an invocation by a Negro minister, the Reverend L. Marshall Shepard of Philadelphia, whereupon Senator Ellison D. Smith, delegate-at-large from South Carolina, walked out, saying, "I'm through. I'm sick and tired of the whole thing. I'll go home and do some talking." On which the Richmond (Virginia) *Times Dispatch* commented as follows:

Senator Smith has the antebellum attitude which holds that the Negro must always remain a helot, exercising few civil rights, taking no part in the affairs of his government, content to leave all such matters to the white race. The Senator is not aware, apparently, that times have changed in the last three-quarters of a century, that the Negro is a citizen, entitled to the rights of a citizen. If the Negro is able, in the face of the manifold handicaps which beset him, to improve his business, educational, economic, and political status, we say more power to him. We are not quaking at the thought of Negro delegates at Philadelphia, and neither should we feel that Southern civilization has been endangered if a colored pastor asked the Almighty to forgive us our sins, which probably are far too numerous anyway.

I believe you should find out the name of the writer responsible for these civilized lines and consider him for *The Nation* Honor Roll of 1936.

LOUIS ADAMIC

New York, June 26

"HOMEKEEPING HEARTS"

Dear Sirs: I have been reading *The Nation* for a number of years and swearing by it, but your sarcastic remarks in the June 24 issue about Homekeeping Hearts made me tear my hair.

You say the conference of the Associated Countrywomen of the World was "made up pretty exclusively of middle-class and upper-class countrywomen." Thank you! I was able to attend because I live just outside Washington, and I drove my 1928 Ford, full of real farm women, in order that we might hear of the problems and achievements of rural women all over the world.

The American women who attended were largely from home-demonstration clubs. Do you not know that home-demonstration clubs are made up of women who have had no opportunity to escape from the drudgery of farm work in kitchen and field? Farm women from three states in the South chartered a train (day coaches, no Pullmans), and when other women heard of it, there were a hundred more who wanted to get on that train. No other coach could be secured so these hundred rode and slept in the aisles and vestibules. Probably these belonged to the landed gentry of the U. S. A. As to the Canadian and overseas delegates, there were ladies and baronesses, but the ones I came in contact with were the same kind of women as ourselves. One Australian woman was able to come because she had won a prize of several hundred dollars.

Why dwell on the reports of Herr Hitler's delegates when those of other countries were so encouraging? The English women's institutes, which are similar to our home-demonstration clubs, teach the women crafts. The miners' wives and countrywomen are helped to market their products. The demonstrators who help the women are volunteers from the "gentry," and they receive no compensation and are not helped by the government as we are. In a sparsely settled district one woman teaches twenty-seven crafts. In our own Southern Highlands women were making quilts for two cents an hour which were sold by exploiters for \$100 a quilt. These women are being helped to market their own products.

If *The Nation* fails to see that any international group of women of whatever class is a movement toward world peace, I feel inclined to transfer my allegiance to Mr. Hearst.

MARY W. JANES, president
of Oxon Hill Home
Demonstration Club

Oxon Hill, Md., June 23

LEFT-WING BOOKS

Dear Sirs: The enrolment of the Book Union's three-thousandth member marks the permanent establishment in the field of revolutionary literature of a left-wing book club. Ever since the Hemingway school of realism for its own sake was succeeded by such writers as Dos Passos, Caldwell, and Farrell, who held up the mirror with a purpose, a new reading public has been addressed. But whether

because of the prohibitive price of books, the narrow choices of small-town libraries, the yellow journalists, or the high-brow cultural organizations, the fact remains that this new public has not been reached. Long after books in America have ceased to be dedicated exclusively to the upper middle class, they are still owned almost exclusively by them.

To combat this situation and act as intermediary between the public at large and the rapidly increasing number of authors writing on the social, economic, and political problems which concern it, the Book Union was founded. Membership in the Book Union was made possible at \$1 a year, unions and other labor organizations being permitted to join as members. In addition to a regular list, one outstanding book such as "John Reed" is offered each month at a very low price.

Since it was founded in October the Book Union has acted as sponsor to a short but important list of novels, biographies, and books on the U. S. S. R. It was perhaps more than a coincidence that the first selection of the Book Union was "Proletarian Literature in the United States."

MARIAN HART,

Executive Secretary, Book Union
New York, May 25

"FROM GENESIS TO FREUD"

Dear Sirs: As an old reader of *The Nation*, I have on various occasions defended your journal against the accusation that its opinions are not sufficiently based on facts. After reading your recent editorial, *From Genesis to Freud*, it will be harder for me to do so.

In this article you accuse me of wandering "into the boggy fields of opinion, conjecture, and sheer fantasy," but you seem to have taken little trouble to find out what I actually said in my paper before the American Medical Association. I did not attack painless childbirth or the use of analgesics as such; nor did I credit sensational journalists with the invention of labor pains. Furthermore, as you might have suspected from your consultation with a psychoanalyst, I did in no way make the statement upon which your reference to Freud is based. Psychoanalysis was referred to in my paper only in con-

nection with birth trauma of the child.

I agree perfectly with the statement made by your psychoanalyst that, since civilized life "has interfered with the automatic nature of the childbearing process, the least civilization can do for the women in childbirth is to find means to alleviate the agony for which it is largely responsible." I am not unmindful of the progress made in this direction by the use of analgesics, but insist that efforts should also be made to counteract the detrimental influences of civilization by proper prenatal education and suitable obstetrical management. Much can actually be accomplished in this way; and it seems reasonable to hope that, as the process by which childbirth has been distorted becomes better understood, an increasing number of women may be enabled to experience easy, natural childbirth without excessive use of drugs.

GERTRUDE NIELSON, M.D.

Oklahoma City, June 13

[Our source of information for the editorial to which Dr. Nielson takes exception was a special report to the *New York Times* of May 15 by William L. Lawrence. We are informed by the *Times* that to date no one has questioned the accuracy of this report.—Editors *The Nation*.]

PAROLE AND CRIME

Dear Sirs: A recent editorial in *The Nation* deplored the "mass hysteria" shown by the New York daily press in its comments on the Titterton murder. Interpretation of the sad affair as indicating a "failure of the parole system" was branded as dangerous thinking. Unfortunately, the logic of the editorial itself does not seem sufficiently inviolate to justify such an attitude.

Parole and suspended sentencing were instituted to provide the convict with a special incentive to good behavior, which he would not have if he were to be freed only after paying his debt to the community in full. Consequently the system is an instrumentality of justice which must be judged not on theoretical merits but on results. If *The Nation* can prove that there are substantially fewer recidivists among paroled prisoners than among convicts released after serving their terms—without any allowance for difficult social conditions, which hit both groups equally—it will supply the only possible proof of the system's value. And even then a community will never entirely lose sight of the undeniable fact that each specific crime perpetrated by a convict on parole would have been prevented if he

had been safely locked up at the time—while no one can prove as clearly that a regularly released second offender would have been a better person if paroled before his time was up. There is no need to prove that Fiorenza would have been a better person after serving his stretch; he would simply have paid the regular penalty for his offense, without being particularly expected to behave himself afterward, and in any event he would not have been able to commit the murder of Mrs. Titterton. This murder, on the other hand, is incontrovertible proof that parole, in Fiorenza's case, failed to induce the convict to be good. This reasoning cannot be refuted as "inhuman" because parole was never meant to be a feat of humanity—such as prison reform—but a means to a social end.

There is no doubt that, as *The Nation* suggests, there are ways to improve that means. Under ideal parole conditions, even more than now, every crime committed by a paroled prisoner would constitute a clear case of failure of the system to do what it was supposed to. And since it was devised not to alleviate punishment but better to protect society from crime, every such failure is of greater interest to the imperiled public than a good many successes. What aroused the ire of the press in the Titterton instance has become an almost typical pattern—the sequence of minor offense, conviction, parole, major offense, conviction, parole, capital offense. Every case of that pattern will be taken as evidence of a failure of the entire system as practiced. The thinking such a conclusion is based upon may, in the wrong hands, be dangerous—but it certainly isn't loose.

E. B.

New York, June 15

CORRECTION

In an article entitled *Who's Behind the Black Legion* by Paul W. Ward in the June 10, 1936, issue of *The Nation*, it was erroneously stated that Duncan C. McCrea, prosecuting attorney of the County of Wayne, Michigan, was "confessedly" a member of the Black Legion. This statement was based upon press dispatches. In justice to Mr. McCrea *The Nation* wishes to state that it is informed that Mr. McCrea was not a member of the Black Legion at any time and that he had never been active, directly or indirectly, in the said organization. *The Nation* regrets that the statements in Mr. Ward's article with reference to Mr. McCrea were open to misconception.—Editors *The Nation*.

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